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JUN 18 1942

THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XXIII. No. 586 [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, MAY 16, 1942 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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WHAT THEY LEFT UNSAID

We have reached a crisis in this war—one in which statements made by the Premier and the Foreign Secretary may have as much effect as pronouncements by President Wilson or Mr. Lloyd George in 1918. In his Sunday broadcast Mr. Churchill spoke with a youthful, we might say, an adolescent gusto. If any of his hearers had forgotten, on the anniversary of his coming to power, what we owe to his leadership, the memory was revived by his vigour, his confidence and his buoyant temper. Many may even have been induced to forget the haunting issue of strategy about which responsible people are so deeply concerned. About the sea and air battle in the Pacific he could say little, if only because little is known; about Burma he preferred silence—a silence which regrettably included the part played by the Chinese. On the question of the second front he left the enemy to guess his intentions; he was wise enough not to scold public opinion for restiveness, as the men of routine do, but instead to congratulate himself that he had behind him a militant nation.

It became fairly clear as Mr. Churchill went on that he relies far more than most of us do on the air bombardment as a second front. We do not share his confidence that Germans, unlike British, will be undermined by the destruction of their cities. We do not doubt that the industrial resources of the United Nations can assure us a growing supremacy in the air, but the coolest survey we can make of the record convinces us that Mr. Churchill over-estimates the importance of the air-arm in its function of destroying the enemy's arsenals, docks and factories, as gravely as he has under-estimated it as a factor in sea-warfare and in combined operations on land. While we and the Americans have been concentrating so much of our efforts upon the mass-production of giant bombers, the resources of the defence have been overtaking the power of the attack. Mr. Churchill justly praised the gallantry of Malta, but did not seem to realise the technical lessons of its survival. Relying more exclusively on ground defences than we ourselves do, the Germans also can make the military objectives of a vital area which is worth the pains all but impregnable. The Ruhr, in spite of its vast ring of "flak" and searchlights, can still be raided by brave men, but any accuracy of aim is scarcely possible. Lübeck and Rostock suffered heavily because they were weakly defended, but when our bombers came back to destroy the neighbouring target at Warnemünde, they found that it had been hastily fortified, and we lost 19 planes in an attack which produced disappointing results. It is, of course, useful to compel the enemy to immobilise men and guns to defend his cities, as we have had to do. These aerial operations, whether in Malta or round the Northern coasts, divert part of his air force from the Russian front. But it is, we gravely fear, a delusion to suppose that the bomber can make the decisive contribution to the eventual victory. It may be the case that the wide dispersal of our forces tells too heavily against any continental offensive at an early date, but by our failure to plan it betimes we may have incurred the condemnation of history.

Mr. Churchill in this broadcast was addressing the German nation as directly as his own people. His warning over the use of poison gas was withheld from them by the Nazi censorship: our own propagandists have endeavoured to rub in its lesson to a public, which, as we know, listens increasingly to British radio. We may hope that Mr. Churchill's warning has made the use of gas less likely. There should be no doubt in the minds of Germany's leaders that any use of this device against the Russians will be instantly answered from our side, however much we may loathe adding yet another to the grim catalogue of horror. But we would add a word of caution. The Germans are said to be using a new mine, which, like all explosives, liberates gas; but is it poison gas? Since they hope to advance, it seems unlikely that they would contaminate the land they wish to cross. Before we act, let us be sure of the facts. For the rest, Mr. Churchill was chiefly concerned to awaken terror in the breasts of the enemy by describing our growing power in the air, and he did it in his own full-blooded way. That is only half of what we have to say to them; his only contribution to the other constructive half was a more definite stress on "liberation" for "Hitlerite Germany" than he has been accustomed to use. But more is needed. The leaders of Britain must say in clear terms that we are prepared to support and regard as potential friends those in Germany who resist the Nazis and show readiness to co-operate in a new Europe. Mr. Eden, in his otherwise sensible speech at Edinburgh, also shirked this task. We have reason to believe that events and reckonings have begun to convince the cooler minds among Germans that they cannot hope to win this war against the growing power of the United Nations. They may even be pretty much where Germany was on the eve of the great spring offensive of 1918. Their striking power is still formidable, but they are suffering from increasing tension at home. There is less hunger than there was then, but a deeper political unrest. The evidences of underground activity among the workers accumulate; the Catholics close their ranks and the Nazi terror grows more ruthless. In such a situation two responses are possible to the threats that come from our camp. The tougher ranks will steel themselves for an effort that shall surpass all their previous attempts: if it fails, they will make ready to die in the last ditch. Those, on the other hand, who always looked askance at the Nazis will ask themselves whither this mad Führer is leading them. Mr. Eden, addressing himself to this section, said plainly that if they want to see a return to civilisation in Germany, they must take "active steps to rid themselves of their present regime." There he stopped. It is early yet to expect "active steps." But will responsible men risk them until they are assured that a Germany which frees herself will have her due place in the liberal, co-operative world which Mr. Eden sketched in such felicitous phrases? They cannot reckon on it, and Dr. Goebbels takes care that every contrary utterance of our few fanatical bitter-enders shall reach them twice over through the loudest of his megaphones. Until Mr. Eden can say plainly that a free Germany shall share with the rest of us a life compatible with self-respect and economic security, the average German man may prefer to endure Mr. Churchill's bombs lest he and his children should suffer Lord Vansittart's peace.

Home Front *(by an Industrial Correspondent.)*

The persistence of the outcry against the fuel rationing scheme, even after the debate in the House of Commons had shown that nobody had any practicable alternative to propose, is very disquieting. It is time enough that the situation which has arisen never need have arisen, and would not have arisen had the coal problem been handled with ordinary commonsense. But that is entirely beside the point. The question now is whether we are to take 30,000 or 40,000 coal miners out of the army, after they have been trained, and to impose a serious strain on our limited transport, rather than submit to a rationing scheme which has been designed to steer the best practicable course between conflicting claims. Rationing on a basis of past consumption would be obviously unfair: rationing on a simple basis of so much per head would be unworkable in view of the different sizes and warmth of houses and the difference of need between individuals. Rationing that omitted gas and electricity would be grossly unfair to those who depend entirely on coal or coke. Rationing "through the trade" on the lines suggested would be either the same thing as rationing on past consumption or open the door to all sorts of discrimination. In short, Sir William Beveridge seems to have seen all the problems and done his best to solve them as far as they can be solved. Yet the Tories continue to raise a howl, even after this has been plainly demonstrated. Now, why?

* * *

In part, the outcry is no doubt the selfish protest of persons who see themselves at last in danger of being seriously inconvenienced by the war. In part, too, it is a trade protest, got up by the vested interests. At this point, it gets all mixed up with the other Tory outcry against reorganisation of the coal mines, which is being furiously resisted because it is regarded as the thin end of the Socialist wedge. Logically, one would suppose that the opponents of fuel rationing would be the strongest advocates of a reorganisation designed to increase the output of coal. Actually the same persons are opposing both, and are therein showing the dishonesty of their attitude. They try to ride off by proposing that the miners should produce more by working longer hours, ignoring the fact that a high proportion of the men left in the pits are old men who are finding even the existing pace of work a very severe strain. I do not deny that, over and above this, there are other causes why mining output is not so high as it might be, or that among these causes is the strong discontent which many of the miners feel. But longer hours, so far from remedying this state of affairs, would make it worse. Such higher output as can be secured by a greater effort on the part of the miners will come when they are well assured that the mines are being worked in the national interest, that good seams are not being left unworked with a view to post-war profits, and that the coalowner interest is not being allowed to have its own way because it is strongly entrenched in both Houses of Parliament.

* * *

The Chancellor of the Exchequer's White Paper on family allowances is carefully non-committal, but a phrase or two in it suggest that the Government is at last prepared to take the project seriously. My conclusion, after reading the White Paper, is that contributory schemes can be definitely ruled out, and so can schemes linking the proposed allowances to the existing provisions for income-tax relief. It seems clear that the only workable scheme is that which will provide the money needed for family allowances out of general taxation. The *net* cost of such a scheme, applicable to all children, is put in the White Paper at about £125 millions a year. A scheme beginning only with the second child would cost about £55 millions *net*, and a scheme beginning with the third child only £22 millions. The saving to be got from imposing a Means Test as a condition of receiving the allowances would be relatively small; and this idea can also be ruled out. Beyond these few points, the question opens out widely, and will, I hope, get in due course an article to itself.

* * *

Under the Essential Work Order, large bodies of workers in the key industries—miners, transport workers and builders, as well as engineers—are now getting a "guaranteed week." That means that they are entitled to a full week's pay at standard rates provided they are available for work, even if work is actually interrupted from causes beyond their control. The "established" men on the railways and in a number of other services had the "guaranteed week" before the war; but it is an innovation in most industries, and means a very big change where, as in building or dock labour, the previous contract of employment was by the hour or the day or half-day. Clearly, this is one of the concessions which the Labour movement will struggle hard to keep when the war is over; and the "guaranteed week" at a guaranteed minimum wage is likely to take first place among the reconstruction demands of the Trade Unions. The guaranteed wage would not, of course, be payable in case of voluntary absence from work, or of sickness; nor would it cover unemployment in the form of "standing off" for a complete week or more. Unemployment and sickness are matters to be covered by the plan which the Beveridge Committee is at present drafting. "Standing off" raises greater difficulties; for some employers have deliberately used it as a means of keeping available a reserve of labour, and this abuse ought to be prevented. But the "guaranteed week" by itself would give the main body of workers a much greater security of income than they had had in the past, and would considerably improve the "status" of those under a wage-contract. It would also be a force making for better industrial organisation; for where labour has to be paid for a full week there is a stronger incentive to make full use of it. The conditions governing its application to various trades are getting worked out now, under war conditions—for example, an important question about its application to the mines has just been settled. It would be easy to continue it after the war, and of course this would need legislation similar to that covering holidays with pay. The Government if it wants to give the workers a simple earnest of its good intentions, could well announce at once that it is getting the necessary legislation ready.

* * *

I cannot help feeling that, over a wide field of controversial politics, there is another crisis not far ahead. The Government got over the production crisis of a few months ago without facing any of the deeper issues, by persuading the country to give Mr. Lyttelton's co-ordination plan a trial. There will be no fresh production crisis just yet, in the armament industries. But coal has taken the place of munitions in the centre of the storm; and such matters as this mortgage business are also potentially explosive to a high degree. Then there is the continued failure, after the appointment of Sir William Jowitt and Lord Portal, to make any pronouncement at all about even the elements of post-war planning. Is there to be a National Planning Authority? Is there to be effective public control over the use of land? Is there to be a policy of "employment for all" and a reasonable living wage, with the requisite guarantee against deflation? Is there to be a big, long-term programme for the re-building of Britain? All these questions are unanswered still.

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STAFF AND PREMIER

In the profit and loss account of the past six months' operations of war, whose implications the House of Commons will shortly debate in public, two debit items overshadow every other entry. The first, in order of time, is the failure of the loudly heralded British offensive in Libya; the second, immeasurably graver, is the loss of Singapore and Burma. The immediate causes of these two major strategic reverses are similar. In the case of Libya it is now plain that the offensive was begun in defiance of the essential rule of strategy—the attainment, before operations, of adequate superiority at the point of contact. In the Far East, the decision to disperse our strength and endeavour, unselectively, to oppose the enemy at every point chosen by him for offensive action led inevitably to the series of catastrophes which have befallen the Allies. Reinforcements of men, material and aircraft, whose concentration at Rangoon would have made the Burma Road and the link with China secure, were dispersed, too thinly and too late, between Malaya and Java; capital ships vital to our command of the Indian Ocean were hazarded without air protection in pursuance of efforts to hold the untenable; divisions which could have rendered Australia impregnable were left to be engulfed in the collapse of the ill-planned, last-ditch defence of Singapore; valuable naval units were squandered in an heroic but abortive engagement with the Japanese battle fleet covering the predictably overwhelming invasion of Java. Never, at the point of contact, had we even equality of strength with that of the enemy.

Faced with this sombre record of disappointment and disaster, Parliament would shirk its duty if it did not insist on probing deeply into responsibilities for strategy whose results have been so unsuccessful. There is no desire in the House or in the country to hunt vindictively for scapegoats. What is sought is absolute assurance that the same factors as may have contributed to past errors will not continue to operate; and such assurance cannot be obtained without asking how responsibilities for the higher direction of the war are to be apportioned. It is a question to which, in one sense, Mr. Churchill has already supplied the answer. Straining, it might be held, the doctrine of collective Cabinet responsibility, he has repeatedly insisted that, as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, he shoulders, and must shoulder, ultimate responsibility for the whole conduct of the war. This assertion, however, does not completely dispose of the matter. Mr. Churchill has on occasion not disdained the shelter of "the opinion of my professional advisers." Indeed, during a debate on February 24th this year, he was at pains to insist to Parliament that the Chiefs of Staff of the Three Services had "never had a freer hand or a greater or more direct influence" in the conduct of a war. In proof thereof, and to forestall criticism of inadequacy of joint Service consultation in planning, a White Paper setting forth the structure of joint staff committees was issued last April. Obviously the problem of the relation of Staff and Premier is delicate and complex. The job is not to blame any individual or individuals, but to get the relation right.

On the degree of "freedom" enjoyed by the professional chiefs of the Services the White Paper throws no light whatever. It shows that, on the "journeyman level" adequate machinery exists for joint collation of intelligence and joint framing in detail of appreciations and plans between the three Services. It also reveals a high degree of centralisation at the top, in the Committee in which the three Chiefs of Staff in their corporate capacity advise the Cabinet through the Minister of Defence. This being so, a crucial factor for Parliamentary inquiry is the extent to which the professional opinion thus tendered to

the War Cabinet is exposed to political or personal influences not germane to the business of the Chiefs of Staff. As Minister of Defence, Mr. Churchill is *ex-officio* chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee and attends its meetings, so he has told Parliament, once in ten times—*i.e.*, presumably for important agenda. In his absence he is represented by General Ismay, the director of the War Cabinet Secretariat. The part thus played by General Ismay is difficult to assess from the outside, but it is obvious that his participation in conferences may exercise a profound influence. Representing Mr. Churchill and privy, it may be supposed, to his master's mind, General Ismay must often disclose, wittingly or unwittingly, the Prime Minister's inclinations. Should these appear to run counter to the advice or proposals which the Committee is in course of framing, the Chiefs of Staff are obviously placed in a dilemma. They must either modify their conclusions or tender advice known in advance to be unpalatable to the Minister on whose favour their own appointments depend. Confronted by a war whose scale and political implications outrun most men's experience and vision, they may well think twice before deciding to disagree with a powerful personality who is prepared himself to shoulder the responsibility. And have they not already seen one Chief of Staff and one outstanding Commander-in-Chief blown from hemisphere to hemisphere by the ill wind of Ministerial displeasure?

The demand that the Chiefs of Staff should be independent of political influences while considering technical questions of strategy has been construed by the Lord Chancellor as advocacy of military dictatorship incompatible with Parliamentary democracy. This is misleading sophistry. It is in no way suggested by critics of the present system of strategic planning that the War Cabinet's responsibility for ultimate decisions should be in any way lessened. Theirs must be the final judgment and in their deliberations political, as well as strictly operational factors, must be weighed. For example, on political grounds (having regard in particular to Turkish reactions) it may well have been inevitable that an expedition should have been sent to Greece even at the cost of throwing away the fruits of General Wavell's initial victory in Libya. Again, there were doubtless political factors which may have worked against deciding, in the Far East, to concentrate on the defence of essentials—Burma, Australia and Ceylon—and letting Malaya and the Dutch East Indies temporarily go. But, *pace* the Lord Chancellor, whose view expressed to the Lords last week seems to be that the humblest planning staff officer should carry a political compendium in his knapsack, the functions of the professional chiefs of the fighting Services are not to weigh considerations of politics, domestic or external. Their job is to pronounce, for the Cabinet's guidance, on the strictly operational merits of this or that plan, and on the means for executing it.

Can it be said that, as matters stand, there is no encroachment on the Chiefs of Staffs' province? Patently Mr. Churchill, in person or through his *Eminence kaki*, General Ismay, influences their judgment, on great and small issues alike, long before final reference to the War Cabinet. The recommendations which the War Cabinet (Mr. Churchill in the chair) ultimately ratifies is one which the War Cabinet's Defence Committee (Mr. Churchill in the chair) has endorsed, and which the Chiefs of Staff Committee (Mr. Churchill presiding or represented) has put forward. Whereas the War Cabinet should have before it a strictly scientific appreciation on which to found its final judgment, it may on crucial occasions actually have a brief already coloured by Ministerial influence at too early a stage.

It is a system fraught with serious disadvantages. At best, identification of Prime Minister and Minister of Defence relegates the three Service Ministers to a position in which they have little or no say in operations. This renders it all the more important that the War Cabinet should have a guarantee that the Service advice on which it sits in judgment is genuinely the corporate view of the joint planning staffs, and not a reflection of the advocacy of the War Cabinet's own chairman. No such guarantee in present circumstances being possible, unresolved doubts are bound to persist. Did the "impatience" with which Mr. Churchill (so he told Parliament) awaited General Auchinleck's offensive in Libya last winter lead to a decision to launch the attack prematurely, before conclusive superiority at the point of contact had been built up? What part in our disastrous Far Eastern strategy was played by the Prime Minister's avowed belief in the magnificently nonsensical policy of "fighting the enemy wherever found"? Are changes needed in the personnel of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, or are past errors at least in part due to the intervention of a dominant but, in operations of war, unlucky personality, too fascinated by the excitement of War Rooms, too prone to intuitional judgments, and over-inclined to play Marlborough in dramatic conferences staged, as Lord Hankey has pointed out, at fantastic hours of night unsuitable for clear thinking by hard-worked staffs? The mere fact that no reassuring answer can be given to these questions is sufficient to prove, even were there no record of disasters in evidence, that the higher direction of the war needs urgent reform.

One solution would be a different Prime Minister—a solution which everyone who realises Mr. Churchill's immense qualities and unique services views with apprehension—content to play a less exciting, more constitutional role. The only other yet propounded is that the Chiefs of Staff Committee (whose membership, incidentally, requires enlargement so as to include a technical expert) should have a permanent, whole-time non-political chairman, charged with promoting and presenting to the War Cabinet's Defence Committee the joint views of the three Service staffs, and—equally important—that the present equivocal "representation" of the Prime Minister on the Chiefs of Staff Committee should cease. This proposal, which has received powerful support in the Lords and the columns of *The Times*, has this to commend it, that its acceptance would obviate the loss of Mr. Churchill's services as dynamic leader of the national effort.

UNITY IN THE U.S.A.

[Mr. Julian Huxley has just returned from a visit to the United States.]

THE United States is passing through a paradoxical phase. While it is rapidly achieving a basic unity behind a rapidly growing war effort, there is a great deal of surface disunity. We need not be too gloomy about the disunity: most of it is steam blown off in the process of making the adjustment to the new type of unity required by war. But there is no reason for refusing to acknowledge its existence, or for not trying to understand its cause.

A few weeks ago Quentin Reynolds, who had just arrived from Russia, made a speech at a public dinner. He was very outspoken. The general sense of his remarks was that he had come back to America imagining that he would find it engaged in an all-out struggle to lick the Japs and Hitler, but that so far as he could see the war seemed to be chiefly against Britain and President Roosevelt. This rhetorical exaggeration unfortunately contains a considerable kernel of truth. The United States is still very far from being united. The sudden emotional flame of national unity which swept the nation after Pearl Harbour died down after a few weeks. The real unity, international as well as national, has to be forged through effort, suffering and disaster. It is steadily, if slowly, taking shape; but meanwhile its emergence is being veiled and delayed by the old disunity which is still very much there, though often manifested in new ways.

It is as difficult for many Englishmen to realise the bitterness against President Roosevelt which exists in many quarters in America, as it is for most Americans to realise that there is any serious criticism of Mr. Churchill, let alone hostility towards him, in Britain. But it is a fact. Mr. Churchill came in as a new broom: Mr. Roosevelt has ten years of the New Deal behind him. Thus to that large minority of Americans who hate the New Deal, Roosevelt, in spite of their acceptance of his foreign policy, is still "that man," he and all the works of the New Deal an un-American anathema. He is accused in the Press and on public platforms of using the war to further his New Deal domestic policy, of being a good politician but a bad administrator, of allowing old grudges to stand in the way of war appointments, of taking too much on his own shoulders until he becomes, in Walter Lippmann's words, the "bottleneck of bottlenecks," of not tolerating first-class men in his vicinity, of favouring labour at the expense of business and the nation.

When it is impolitic to attack him directly, the attack is made on one of his pet schemes, or on Mrs. Roosevelt. This happened recently when Congress made such an exhibition of itself over the O.C.D.—the Office of Civilian Defence. The O.C.D. is in America to-day what the Ministry of Information was in Britain during the early part of the war—the butt and scapegoat among Government offices. Its organisation under Mayor la Guardia was certainly in rather a mess; and it was probably a mistake for Mrs. Roosevelt to have accepted a high post in it. But Congress and the anti-New-Deal press proceeded to seize on it and worry it with all the idiotic fury of a puppy worrying an old slipper. All activities for home propaganda and for improving civilian morale (including Disney's admirable Donald Duck film about the income tax which actually found itself with its appropriation cut out) were attacked as "boondoggling" and as a shocking waste of the taxpayers' money. The opportunity for a good slap at the Administration was irresistible even if taking it meant disregarding the experience of other countries which had been longer in the war, and caused a sapping of confidence and a retardation in achieving unity.

The details of administration are undoubtedly not Roosevelt's strongest point: it is true that he has not offered satisfactory positions to opponents of high calibre like Willkie, that he has no inner War Cabinet and no Ministers without Portfolio or their equivalents whose main job would be to help him to think and to take decisions on general policy; it is also true that he has tried to ensure that labour's hard-won gains (won a generation later than in Britain) shall not be lost as a result of war fever. But many of his opponents go far beyond constructive criticism in their attacks. They use any policies of his which happen to be unpopular, as means of discrediting the Administration. A month or so ago Mr. Landon, one-time Republican candidate for the Presidency, said that it was wrong to undertake social experiments in the middle of a war, and the *New York Times* had an approving leader. If he had added "for their own sake" or "for political reasons," his remarks would have made sense; but the experience of 1914 to 1918 and of Britain in the last two years ought to have made it plain enough that some pretty drastic social experimentation is necessary to win modern wars. However, the temptation of finding a stick to beat the New Deal dog was too great for logic or experience to resist. Congress in particular is worried about its future, and would feel much happier if the New Deal could be put into cold storage during the war.

Meanwhile, economic sectional interests are still as far from unity as political sectional interests. The farm bloc in Congress (the Englishman tends to forget that the United States, though so far advanced industrially, has about half its population on the land and in rural small towns) recently overrode the President's express and repeated wishes and fixed a ceiling for the prices of agricultural products which is inevitably sending up the cost of living and increasing the danger of "vicious spiral" inflation. Business still has one eye so firmly fixed on profits that some of the country's available resources, such as copper, are not being adequately, let alone fully, utilised; a recent investigation disclosed some serious scandals about profits on war contracts

so high that they had to be disguised in the form of enormous bonuses to the owners and their managerial staff.

There is much unfair anti-labour agitation. For instance, a large section, perhaps the majority, of Americans have been made to believe that strike, are becoming more serious, and are badly holding up war production, whereas they have during the past twelve or eighteen months been far below the normal peace-time level, and the total time lost through them is very much less than that lost through illness, and less even than that lost through the common cold alone. Also that the 40-hour week means that men cannot work longer than forty hours in a week, whereas of course it merely means that overtime has to be paid after the standard period.

On the other hand, labour too has been overplaying its sectional interest. It has not sensed the strength of the feeling for greater equality of sacrifice, and has already had to give up double pay for Sunday work and the right to strike during the war. Very probably it will also have to accept a 44-hour or 48-hour week as the standard.

These squabbles need not be taken too seriously. They are in a sense the inevitable accompaniment of the adjustment of America to war. This adjustment could not but help being a drastic one: the United States, by virtue of its geographical position and the stage of its development, was more isolated from the rest of the world than any other great power, and had not been pushed so far along the path of social reform. In regard to such matters as labour organisation, social security, or housing, for instance, it was until very recently about thirty years behind this country. The process of adjustment to the conditions of total war and to occupying a central position on the international stage was correspondingly more violent.

But the disunity is in a very real sense superficial; and under the surface the forces of unity are steadily gathering power. Armament production is being rapidly increased; the farmers are continuing to work overtime to produce lease-lend food for Britain; non-party opinion and non-sectional effort are gathering power in support of the common struggle; millions who were used to thinking in terms of individual or sectional interests are finding their place in a unified whole. Superficial disunity is giving place to fundamental unity.

If this unity is to be achieved in the briefest possible space of time, it is essential that the American people should grasp that this war is both a war and a social revolution or transformation. By and large, the people of Britain have grasped the fact: not more than ten or at the outside twenty per cent. of the American people have yet done so. That is the most basic part of the adjustment from peace to war. It is also the most difficult. But already the ferment is at work, and it is safe to prophesy that within the next few months America will emerge from the period of adjustment with a unified but also a quite new outlook.

JULIAN HUXLEY

PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

[This is the first of two articles in which Mr. Rowse considers the future of the Public School from a Socialist point of view.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

THERE is considerable danger that in the very important discussions going on in and around the Board of Education, which may determine the future shape of our educational system after the war, that point of view which matters most may be inadequately represented: the point of view of people who have passed through elementary and secondary schools, the great bulk of the nation. Certainly it was not represented in the discussion in the House of Lords recently. (One wonders why these Labour men are made peers at all if they cannot stand up for the interests of their people better than they do.) The representatives of the public-school interests are very wideawake; in the last two years they have tightened up their organisation; a powerful new association has come into existence, the Governing Bodies' Association, whose lobbying activities though very persistent are kept pretty private.

The Labour Party seems to be unaware of what is afoot, still less to realise what is at stake. There was a time in the early years after the last war when Labour spokesmen, like Tawney, were in the forefront of educational opinion and led public discussion on the subject. But the Labour Party has such a wonderful way of not making the best use, or indeed any effective use, of the resources of ability at its disposal that it is not surprising that it has fallen behindhand. It is fantastic, but it is true, that the Conservative Party is far more active on the subject of education. It is almost unbelievable. But they realise what is at stake. The President of the Board of Education, a Conservative, has had the sense to bring in a very able and sympathetic mind, a man who is both a Fellow of an Oxford College and at the same time has a responsible position in the world of affairs, as chairman of the Conservative Party's Advisory Committee on Education.

It is, if the Labour Party knew its duty, a very improper thing for a Conservative to be President of the Board of Education at all. I am all in favour of Conservatives as Service Ministers: they are likely to be more efficient as such. But what has a Conservative to offer constructively about the future of education? He is almost certain to be a public-school man, and as such representative of a type and a point of view which is that of a very small, if influential, minority in the nation. He is unlikely properly to appreciate and understand, for he has not the experience, the point of view and needs of the elementary and secondary schools at which the vast majority of the nation are educated. Public schools are, after all, a private *enclave* in the educational system of the country. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that their great day is over. They performed a great service to the country in the nineteenth century, when the education of the new middle-class (*pace* Matthew Arnold) was in question. But there are all too evident signs around us, in the conduct of the war, in administration, in politics, in the commands in the Services, in the Empire, that that particular kind of mentality which the Public Schools stand for, is no longer in keeping with the needs and demands of the contemporary world, let alone the world which will emerge from still more years of war and struggle. Whatever we may think of the Nazis—and I regard them as criminals—they have at any rate been intelligent and clever, and knocked spots off our diplomats and brass hats. Just as the Crimean War showed up the incompetence, the inefficiency, the out-of-date standards of the old and outworn aristocratic system of the early nineteenth century, and so made way for the vigour and efficiency of the new middle-class, so it is clear that this war will prove a solvent of our outworn institutions, modes of thought and types of mind. Either this, or our society is on the down-grade. For my part I believe that there are great sources of vigour and energy and creativeness in the English people—if only these sources are released from the restraints of conventionalism, social conformity, orthodox standards, and the humbug which has ruled for the past two decades.

But how is it possible to think that a new impulse in the sphere of education is going to come from those circles which have been responsible for clogging our native energy, damping down all original thinking, discouraging new men and new ideas until some of us have become dangerously sick with disillusion? Everybody knows that the Board of Education itself is in vital need of new blood, a new impulse. Is it likely that that is to come from Conservatives with their public-school outlook, or for that matter from old and tired Labour men with a sense of inferiority, who are afraid to stand up to them? I do not believe it.

What is at stake is the future relation of the public schools to the schools of the nation, elementary and secondary, and the freedom of the latter to develop their own proper ethos and make their own contribution to the national life. Lord Hankey, on behalf of the Board, let a very discreet cat out of the bag when he said that "there were many who believed that boarding schools could enlarge the part they played in the community." The truth is that there are not so many who think that; but those who do are very influential, highly organised and the Board of Education is under constant pressure from them. They are essentially the Headmasters' Conference, in which the headmasters of the public schools are organised, and their newly formed Governing Bodies' Association. Their relations with the Board in the past two years, if they were made public, would make interesting reading; so too would the reactions of the Board to their pressure. At one moment it looked as if the Board was going to give way all along the line; then the new Churchill–Labour Government was formed, and its hands were strengthened to resist the clamant demands of the public-schools to be saved.

At the beginning of the war they saw ruin staring them in the face: hence the clamour for the State to come to their rescue. A scheme for a large provision of scholarships for boys from elementary and secondary schools was vamped up—the State to pay of course—as a good cover for the financial aid. As the war went on, they began to find that they were not so ruined after all, though their difficulties had increased and the future for them was uncertain. The Headmasters' Conference accordingly piped down their campaign which opened a vista ending in State control, and resolved that their representations in future should not emphasise the financial aspect but put the social aspect of the scholarship scheme in the foreground. The Governing Bodies' Association has plucked up courage to go further, and in a privately circulated memorandum they even claim that the Public schools might play a larger part in English education, through the operation of the scholarship scheme, than they have in the past. So they might, if it comes to pass. The question is whether it is desirable that they should.

In the view of elementary and secondary school people it is clearly not desirable to enable the public schools to play any larger part in English education than they do already; and it is most undesirable that they should ensure their future by drawing away the best pupils from the elementary and secondary schools. The whole scheme is impracticable on financial, social, and (I hope) political grounds. When the war is over, the State is unlikely to have the money to finance a scheme of this sort extensive enough to save all the public schools. I am sure that working-class parents will not be prepared to have their children sent away to be educated into a different class of society, breaking up the unity of their families, when there is a perfectly good day-school system at their doors, which in many cases offers a better education than the inferior public schools do. And if there were any such danger, I hope the Labour Party will interpose its veto upon any such

scheme. It is now in a position politically to do so, and as the war goes on and we come near to the defeat of Fascism it will be in a still stronger position to exert its influence in the shaping of the new order. If only it knows better how to call upon the resources of ability at its disposal, among younger men, waiting for its word.

A. L. ROWSE

A LONDON DIARY

THIS week the 1922 Committee has once again emerged as a body, this time to hold up the Coalition Government's fuel-rationing scheme. It breathed, if not fire and brimstone, certainly gas, light, and coke. Emissaries of the 1922 Committee on the one hand, and of the Board of Trade on the other, actually got down to counting noses—and reckoning who could be led by them. A little earlier there had been some rather awkward parleys between the distributors and producers. For if the Dalton-Beveridge Plan were to be denounced, then might not that in turn lead to a suggestion that after all the thing to do is to control the mining industry? Had not in fact three Conservative M.P.s, led by Mr. Hugh Molson, with frightful indiscretion actually suggested that fuel rationing should be postponed until after the mine owners had had their house put in order for them? A disastrous suggestion. However, agreement appears pretty quickly to have been reached on a line of propaganda to the effect that first, fuel rationing is unnecessary and "bureaucratic," second, reorganisation of the mining industry is unnecessary and "socialistic," third that the way out of the difficulty is really perfectly simple—the miners should work longer hours.

* * *

At least as interesting in all this as the details of the fuel-rationing scheme itself, is the fact that the 1922 Committee should at this particular moment have taken up this particular attitude. Labour members could be forgiven if they felt at times as though they were back in the breezy days before there was a political truce and all that: the days before goings-on of this kind were reprehended as "inimical to the war effort" and "disruptive of the national unity." I sympathise with the plaintive query of the *Daily Herald*, begging to know what would have been said by the Conservatives if the Parliamentary Labour Party had suddenly taken a similarly sharp line with the Government. The risk, it must be said, is small.

* * *

Herbert Morrison is to be congratulated on falling foul of the Vansittartites. The statement of which they complain was quite unexceptionable. In fact it merely conformed, as he himself has pointed out, with the provisions of the Atlantic Charter and with Stalin's Order of the Day. It is hard to respect Ministers who pay lip-service to the Vansittart view of Germany and imply that they want to do all sorts of unexplained and unmentionable things to the masses in Germany after the war, when privately we know quite well they intend nothing of the sort. They simply use ferocious words to hide their fear of facing the real difficulties of post-war settlement, and they allow themselves to be blackmailed by the threat that if they talk sense they will be considered "soft." The defeat of the German war-machine and the liquidation of all Nazi officials is an absolute necessity, but everyone who has even begun to think about the subject knows that sooner or later we shall have to make peace with some Germans, and that Germans of some brand will sooner or later have to rule their own country. What excuse can there be for deceiving people by talk which may extend the war by its effect in Germany, and which outside Germany can only lead to revulsions of feeling as unreal as those that bedevilled politics between 1918 and 1939?

* * *

There is more trouble in the Polish corridors. I mean, of course, the corridors at Malet Street, Stratton Street, and similar official centres where certain Polish propagandists assemble to denounce the suggestion that having obtained paper from the British Government, and publication licences from the British Government, they should for an instant refrain from conducting an agitation of the most dangerous kind against the unity of the Allies and the Soviet Union. Officials of Sikorski's Government have themselves complained to me recently that some of the material whose publication is directly or indirectly facilitated by the British Government could hardly be more damaging if it were the work of Nazi agents. The most glaring offender seems to be Maskiewicz, whose writings are, I understand, being circulated vigorously in certain Polish military quarters. He uses the strongest language about Soviet Russia for the benefit of his fellow-countrymen in this country, and by way of further cementing the United Nations he also attacks the Czechs, demanding "Of what value is an alliance if one of the allies fails to defend even the diplomatic frontiers of another ally? The Czechs do not defend us from the predatory Soviet claims, but instead coo about the future union of Czechoslovakia and Poland." And his writings are bespattered with rumours about matters under negotiation which are of such delicacy and importance that the British press is even formally forbidden to mention them, though this savagely anti-Soviet propagandist is permitted to do so. M. Stronski, Polish Minister of Information, declares in *Dziennik Polski* that Maskiewicz' writings are "a black spot in the history of the Polish press." This is not the way for Poles (who need Russian friendship, if anyone ever needed anything) to behave.

* * *

The struggle against Tsardom in the early years of this century was in Poland an astonishing school of character. Most of the young men who led it were intellectuals who divided their time between Siberia and the University, and all of them at the start were Socialists. A few like Pilsudski went nationalist and semi-fascist: others went communist and served the Revolution in Moscow: the majority remained democrats. They had in common a daring and devotion which marked that generation. Dr. Rajchman, who afterwards served the League and China, was one of them I learned to know: Henryk Ehrlich was another whose ability and integrity won him admirers far beyond the borders of Poland. At the time of the German invasion he led the Jewish workers' party, the Bund, and sat on the Municipal Council which led the resistance of Warsaw. With a colleague of the same party, Victor Alter, he took refuge in Eastern Poland. There with many thousands of others, mostly Socialists, they were arrested by the G.P.U. and deported to a concentration camp in the far interior of Russia. The happy conclusion of the Soviet-Polish alliance led to their release in September of last year. They were then chosen to represent the Bund on the Polish National Council and received British visas to travel to London. The Russians, however, would never give them an exit permit and in December they were arrested and to this day are still in prison. Stiff protests from the Polish Government have produced the curious reply that they now rank as Soviet citizens, because they took refuge in Eastern Poland during the Russian occupation. This is sheer nonsense, if law in these days means anything. Both of them were born in Western Poland, and had been active in the politics of the Republic throughout its existence. They are the victims, so far as I can learn, merely of the old Menshevik-Bolshevik feud. Hitler had no more resolute enemies and the first thing they did when released last September was to issue an appeal to all Polish Jews in Russia to join the army. Presumably in this case Soviet diplomacy and the G.P.U. have got out of step. Russo-Polish friendship is worth more to the Kremlin than the satisfaction of an obsolete party feud. It would be good news to these men's friends in England and America to learn of their release.

Last week I referred to the honesty of the first of the Round Table broadcasts on India. I cannot say that the standard has been maintained. In the chair Sir Frederick Whyte has grown, it seems to me, increasingly afraid lest the balance might seem to tilt against the most conventional British view. Mr. Tamenkar, supporting Congress, is apt to make things easier for Sir Frederick by being rhetorical; a few facts and concrete illustrations are worth a ton of abstractions. Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah is not the best available representative of the Muslims, who are by no means all aristocratic, conservative and pro-British, while excessive weight has been given to the purely orthodox British view by the addition to the panel of a Mr. Howard, who seems to speak rather for Big Business in the East than for anything else. Carl Heath remains a sensible and persistent voice of reason. Whereas in the first broadcast one felt that here was a genuine effort to get at the truth, I think the listener now gets the impression that whatever happens, though graceful concessions are made to the British idea of fair play, no conclusion would be permitted except one that would please Whitehall.

* * *

Mr. Pollak, a refugee who was wounded at Brimshe while serving in the International Brigade, became a journalist and was caught in India when the war broke out. He was interned. A friend of mine has just received a letter from him. The address given is "Anti-Fascist Wing, So-and-so Detention Camp." And yet there has been an idea about that this was a war against Fascism.

* * *

"America is an Eastern Asia. Australia is part of Asia. Africa is also part of Asia. In Northern Europe there is Asiatic blood running thick in the veins of the inhabitants. In Southern Europe, we find many ancient tools formerly used by the people of Asia. Therefore we may also consider Europe as part of Asia."—*Broadcast to the Japanese people by Dr. Tsunekichi Komaki of Kyoto Imperial University.*

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Tom Hopkinson.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The sanest ration for the human being is the balanced ration, and a properly balanced ration cannot be secured on a limited number of courses.—*Daily Sketch.*

"M.C.C. are not carrying on for sake of cricket but in the national interest," said Mr. Stanley Christopherson at annual meeting of M.C.C. . . . —*Daily Sketch.*

Two young bachelors in the farming line, with houses and lands, desire the company and friendship of two young ladies, from Land Army, or rejected by the Army, or just over military age; motor car, houses situated in large village, electric light, good bus service to anywhere, comfortable homes, light duties.—Advertisement in the *Lincolnshire Standard.*

The waste paper effort at Stockton is to be developed by a "Mile of Books." This is to be inaugurated in the High Street on May 28th when the Mayor and Mayoress (Ald. and Mrs. J. W. Gargett) and the deputy-Mayoress (Mrs. J. E. Wilyman) will be present at the laying of the first book, a family Bible.—From *The Northern Echo.*

All country houses have central heating; otherwise we should be frozen out and would have neither heat nor water. This will happen if coal is rationed.—Letter in *Daily Telegraph.*

Mr. Cresswell submitted that it had been decided in the High Court that to call a person a cow was not abusive because the cow was a clean animal.—Extract from a police court report in the *Thames Valley Times.*

WHAT HAPPENED AT DELHI?

WHY did the Cripps mission fail? The hopes of the British people went with him: American and Chinese sympathy backed him, while Indians looked on him as a friend. But history took her revenge, and when he asked the Indians for an act of faith, the sour memories of all that has been amiss from Clive's day to Churchill's surged up to wreck our hopes and their ambitions. It is a complicated story to unravel, since it turns partly on unfamiliar constitutional details and partly on niceties of language.

The attitude of the average Indian towards this war has been through two years broadly one of indifference. Liberal Indians, who follow international affairs closely, were as hostile to the Axis as we are ourselves, but we had wounded their self-respect by making India a belligerent without her consent, and again by limiting the pledges of the Atlantic Charter to Europeans. The average man was unresponsive when we talked of the ideological issues. Against the record of Japanese Imperialism in China, of which he knew little, he set his own experience of the white man's over-developed colour-sense. One Indian leader of some standing, Subhas Bose, a former President of the Congress Party, is the active partisan of Japan, and the unpleasant possibility has to be faced that he may not be alone in this attitude. Mr. Gandhi's pacifism made a graver complication. In the ranks of the Congress Party only one man in three fully shares his total rejection of the use of force, but the Mahatma is held in such high regard that none of his old followers can differ from him without anxiety and pain. In the long run this recalcitrant pacifist minority may have tipped the scales for rejection. Congress could preserve its unanimity only by saying No.

A less propitious background for a mission of reconciliation could hardly be imagined. However adequate the British offer for India's future might be, it had been deferred until our military fortunes stood so low that Indians ask whether we shall be able to meet what Gandhi rather cruelly called our "post-dated cheque." On the other hand, the younger generation chafed at its own impotence. Was it really to stand, passive and aloof, while others decided on the battlefield the destiny of this great nation? Mr. Nehru is by temperament a fighting man, but as a responsible leader he had to take account of the widespread indifference of the masses. If he accepted the British offer, his main task would be to galvanise this passive nation into militancy. He would have to dissipate in a few days suspicions which have accumulated through generations. All the key men in the villages whom he would have to win have their memories of British prisons. The offer had, therefore, to satisfy exacting tests. It was not enough that educated men, trained in legal subtleties, should on the balance of probabilities decide to give it a trial. It had to be so obviously what the people wanted that it would serve to touch springs of hope and courage dormant for centuries.

Could this resurrection happen if the political leaders were divided, with the venerated Mahatma openly on the side of rejection? The miracle might have been accomplished if the offer had been so drafted as to appeal to the popular imagination. It had many merits. It circumvented with admirable ingenuity some of the worst stumbling blocks of previous offers. A first-rate legal mind, as honest as it is subtle, had left its mark upon it. But it lacked what in this situation was essential, a direct appeal to the emotions of the common man. It was reticent. It relied on inference and interpretation. Words are important to the plain man. Beyond a doubt the offer promised the substance of independence at the end of this war; but it refrained from using that magic word. On a hopeful reading it might have given India to-day what in effect would have been a National Government; but again it abstained from using that inspiring term. Perhaps—for this is doubtful—it would have enabled Indians to build up a National Army of their own, but it did not say so. If to the offer as it stood, some warm-blooded colleague, gifted with psychological insight, had been permitted to add a final paragraph or a covering letter written in the noble yet simple language, of which Mr. Churchill is a master, if it had used the words "independence," and "national government," and held out the promise of "a people's army," then, in spite of the past and against Mr. Gandhi, the offer would have been accepted by an enthusiastic nation. This was not done; nor did Sir Stafford Cripps supply the deficiency in his broadcasts. What the apathetic masses heard were the familiar words that arouse no emotional response. "Dominion status" is a good thing, but it has no links with Indian tradition. For an "enlarged Viceroy's Council" will any man risk his life? Finally, on the crucial question of the nation in arms, there was silence.

Perhaps I might end my study here; for these reasons this mission failed. But nothing in this life, and above all nothing in India, is as simple as my explanation. In justice to both sides, I must add some detail. I will deal first with the long-range proposals which were incomparably the more satisfactory part of the British offer. To these Sir Stafford Cripps had devoted his chief attention. But it was the plan for to-day that interested Congress, which was in the circumstances as inevitable as it was unlucky. With the long-term offer it was on the whole favourably impressed. It saw that independence lay within its grasp, since the right of a Dominion to secede was expressly recognised. It raised no objection of principle to the well-drawn plan by which the constitution of the future Indian Union will be built by a democratic procedure. It did not conceal its dislike of the "Pakistan" solution, but it said plainly that it would not think of compelling a Muslim province to join the Union against its will. That was well said. It objected strongly—as all democrats do—to the provision that may allow the autocratic Princes to nominate unrepresentative delegations to the Constituent Assembly. But it stressed none of these criticisms, and was willing to postpone "all questions about the future."

On the other hand, it was upon the long-range proposals that the Muslim League based its unqualified rejection. It played the partisan game shrewdly. It kept silence while the limelight fell on Congress, and issued its rejection only after its rival had taken that responsibility on its own shoulders. It is highly probable that if Congress had accepted the offer, the League's answer would also have been acceptance, though with reservations. Mr. Jinnah is too clever a politician to incur the reproach of obstructing India's defence. If Congress had agreed to enter the Viceroy's Council, it is fairly certain that the Muslim League would also have gone in, though it would have laid down stiff conditions.

The reader will doubtless recollect the admirably fair plan which the offer contained for the settlement of the Hindu-Muslim feud. Mr. Jinnah is the extremist who denies that there is an Indian nation. For him there are two "nations," which must separate, and he demands that provinces which have a Muslim majority shall form a new national unit, which he calls Pakistan. His Muslim League is in numbers and prestige the chief organisation of this creed, but it is very far from representing the whole Muslim community. Pakistan is a difficult conception to realise. It would leave big Muslim minorities scattered over Hindu India. Geographically it could not form a single unit, for Eastern Bengal lies far apart from the more solidly Muslim North-West. Again, in two of its provinces, Punjab and Bengal, the Muslim majority is too slender to be decisive. Liberal Indians of both creeds dislike the idea, because they refuse to see in religious differences a barrier to co-operation in other fields. In point of fact the two largest of these provinces are actually governed to-day by the two creeds in combination. The Bengal Cabinet is composed of the Muslim Peasants' Party, together with the former Left Wing of Congress (now disaffiliated) which represents mainly the Hindu peasants. The Punjab is governed by the Unionist Party, a conservative body in which landlords predominate, and it has Hindu and Sikh as well as Muslim Ministers. These two provinces have discovered that in the daily life of a modern community economic interests are the substance of politics: peasants govern one of them and landlords the other. That will be the pattern of the future, however stubbornly the reactionaries of both creeds may battle to conserve the past. Finally, the whole trend of political and economic development to-day is towards big and quasi-continental units.

All this may be true, but none the less, if Mr. Jinnah has the main body of the Muslim community firmly behind him—which is doubtful—a protesting province cannot be forced into the Indian Union. The Cripps plan provided a way of escape. If, after sharing in the work of the Constituent Assembly, the Muslims find that they cannot accept the constitution that emerges from it, then any of their provinces may vote themselves out of the Union, and if several should do so, they may form Pakistan. To this Mr. Jinnah replied with a refusal to submit to such a test. If a plebiscite should be taken, then only the Muslims should vote. This, needless to point out, was merely a way of saying that the Muslim League rejects all compromise or negotiation. Its demand is flatly for separation, and I think the inference follows that the League, which he leads with a high hand, will take any means it thinks fit to resist Union. This is the story of Ulster over again—with this difference that the Northern Protestants were unanimous, which these Muslims are not. The rejection was absolute and total and it included a refusal to accept or participate in the procedure laid down for setting up the Indian Union. That project, then, is in suspense; nor can it be revived while Mr. Jinnah retains his ascendancy.

It is fair to remember that Congress, while it was deliberating, knew very well that this would be Mr. Jinnah's stand. Nothing it might do to-day would jeopardise a prospect of future union which Mr. Jinnah had already shattered. The best hope of union now lay in the reckoning that if Hindus and Muslims fought side by side for the defence of their common country, they would at the end of the struggle forget their differences. All that the Working Committee of Congress really had to consider was whether it should accept the interim plan proposed for the duration of the war. This part of the offer was an outline so vague that it meant little, until it was filled in by conversation. It invited the "participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country," while making it clear that the British Government retained the control of India's defence. In plain words, the Viceroy's Executive Council should be enlarged and composed entirely of Indian leaders, with the exception of the Defence Member, General Wavell.

The form this concession took was inevitable but uninspiring. I am far from criticising it, for I had long ago made this suggestion in published articles. To change the Constitution would have been an impossibly slow business. But round the Viceroy's Executive Council cling all the wrong associations. It has no resemblance to a British Cabinet. All the decisions of the Indian Government are in form acts of "the Governor-General-in-Council." His autocracy, under the Crown, is qualified by the obligation to consult his Council, of which two members form a quorum, and by their right to appeal against him to the India Office in London. Theoretically his word is law, unless London overrules him. In the past all the more important posts on the Council were held by Civil Servants of British race. In practice a strong official or a team of two or three able men did in

fact wield considerable powers, but London held the brakes and often applied them. Obviously this whole tradition would be upset when new men, not Civil Servants, but Indian leaders with great parties behind them, sat round the old table with the Viceroy. If they were united and resolute, they would be in effect a National Government. If on a big issue the India Office and the Viceroy overruled them, they could by resigning create a crisis which only a very reckless Government in London would risk. That consideration made for acceptance. On the other hand, the Congress leaders contemplated what they called a "mixed" Government, by which they meant the participation of the Muslim League and other minority groups. What would happen if they bickered? Might not a Viceroy's party be formed? In that case, since no rule of collective Cabinet responsibility bound the Council, might it not be reduced by friction to impotence? It was a deadly defect that there would be no Indian Premier. I am here guessing what must have passed through the minds of Dr. Azad and Pandit Nehru, though on paper they indulged in no such tactless speculations. What they did was to seek for an interpretation of the offer which would permit them to accept it; for it is clear that they were eager to accept it, if it meant that the British Government had "made up its mind to transfer real power and responsibility."

The first shock came to them when they realised that though the whole purpose of the offer was, in Mr. Churchill's words, "to rally all the forces of Indian life to guard their land from the menace of the invader," no Indian would have any share whatever in the organisation of defence. After some delay this was met by a new proposal that an Indian should sit as the Defence Member, while General Wavell should be called the War Member. Congress agreed without hesitation that the entire responsibility for strategy and the control of operations should lie absolutely in the General's hands, but they naturally wished to know what functions would fall to the Indian Defence Member. A list was accordingly produced: he was to attend to canteens, stationery, the supply of petroleum, amenities for the troops, schools, demobilisation after the war, the entertainment of foreign missions, relations with the press, and "in addition" the evacuation of threatened areas and the co-ordination of signals. Mr. Nehru must have shivered when he imagined himself rallying a mass meeting to warlike enthusiasm by reciting this list. It was afterwards pointed out that other Members of the Council would have functions connected with defence: the Finance Members would have to pay for it. It was more to the point that the Home Member would organise A.R.P. and "all forms of civilian defence." This meant a great deal—fire-fighting, the care of the civilian population and refugees, and above all the control of the police.

But still Congress felt that this was not enough—it omitted every activity of resistance. Their conception of defence was "to give it a national character and call upon every man and woman in India to participate in it. It means trusting our own people and seeking their full co-operation . . . The war can only be fought on a popular basis." As for the British Government, its view (as Congress put it) "seems to be based on utter lack of confidence in the Indian people and on withholding real power from them."

The bitter memory of past impotence dictated that sentence: it came from an unarmed nation. What did Dr. Azad (who is no pacifist, but a Muslim theologian) mean by "real power"? In blunt English he meant rifles and hand grenades. The younger generation of Congress had plans for a Home Guard and for training mobile guerillas to fight with the tactics perfected in Spain. Nothing of that kind was contemplated in the duties assigned to the Defence Member. Again, they wished to break with the tradition which limits recruitment for the regular army to the so-called "martial races," and to throw it open to volunteers from the whole people. It is true that part of the Indian peasantry is so ill-nourished that it has neither the spirit nor the physique for fighting. But out of this immense population there are scores of millions of several races and both creeds from whom good soldiers can be made. It would be premature and unjust to say that the British Government is opposed to the raising of a popular army. What may be fairly said is that hitherto it has never attempted it. If at any point in these negotiations it had said "We want the co-operation of the Indian leaders in order to organise the people for armed resistance to the invader," the long debate would have ended in acceptance. That would have meant the transfer of real power.

Need I go on? The rest of the debate turned on attempts to discover whether what was offered was in fact a National Government, or merely the old Viceroy's Council enlarged. One test lay in the place of the India Office in the plan. We in London had understood that, since India is to be eventually a Dominion, her affairs would be transferred to the Dominions Office—a department with a light hand, which does not interfere with internal policy. The Indians also had their grounds for this belief. They and we were mistaken. Finally, Congress asked whether the Council would be treated "by convention" as a Cabinet with full rights. The answer was that they must first accept and then discover from the Viceroy himself what rights they would possess. Perhaps the question was unduly blunt, but assuredly the answer was too evasive. At this stage Lord Linlithgow would give no undertakings. There followed an argument that went, I think, regrettably far. "Such a Cabinet would be responsible to no one." But would it not be responsible to the organised Indian parties? Can more be claimed for the British Government, which cannot in war-time hold a general election? Finally, there emerged the old claim that Britain must retain power in order to protect the minorities. On this traditional note the unhappy dialogue ended—in rejection.

What conclusions are we to draw? It stands out sharply that no plan for the post-war future has to-day a chance of acceptance. What has been gained here is, however, of immense value. The British Government has made for the first time a dated offer of what amounts to independence. From that it will not recede. Its interim offer might have succeeded if more attention had been paid to popular psychology. The word that Indians were waiting to hear, the key word "independence," should have been used. It was essential that the India Office should disappear. It should have been plainly said that the Viceroy would be instructed to treat his Council as a National Government. There should have been an Indian Prime Minister. Finally, the Defence Member should have been charged with the organisation and recruitment of a popular armed force. though not with the direction of its operations in the field. All this was, I believe, not far from Sir Stafford Cripps' original intention, but he found himself at Delhi a cog in an ancient machine that changes gear with difficulty. He failed to perform a miracle.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

A SUNDAY AT HOME

MOONLIGHT. What a charming word! It fills the mind with pictures of gondolas on a summer night in Venice and memories of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. I think I have read somewhere that Beethoven did not himself give this title to his composition, but in that case how inspiring was the somebody else who did so! There is certainly one movement in the sonata that suggests—possibly because one knows the title—moonlight on rippled water. The name of the piece is itself music—an improvement on Beethoven—a wren sitting on the eagle's head.

One was conscious of the spell of moonlight almost as soon as the last stroke of Saturday had sounded on the clock. To go out into the world at twenty minutes past midnight was to realise that we live on an enchanted planet, and, as one stood in a circle of nightingales—one singing from every quarter, and indeed every eighth, of the compass—one could not help feeling that there was something to be said for the creation. The stillness of the air, the midnight whiteness of the pear-blossom, were all such as one knew in the peace of childhood, and the songs of the nightingales were such as many of us in childhood knew only in poetry. How one would have liked to be a traveller and a stranger in Southern England, experiencing for the first time such pleasures of the eye and ear!

Custom, it has often been pointed out, dulls the imagination; and there are few things in respect of which this is truer than pear-trees and nightingales. I remember hearing a charming girl many years ago dismissing pear-blossom as "soap suds." It was she who also belittled the oak as the "cauliflower tree." I admit the caricaturist truth of both descriptions, but they are as untrue in essentials as the comparison of the new moon to the paring of a finger-nail. They reduce things to prose—the prose of those who enjoy not enjoying the things other people enjoy. In the same way many of the inhabitants of the southern counties of England are vehemently anti-sentimentalist about the nightingale. I met a man in an inn during the week-end and congratulated him on the nightingale that I had heard singing outside his gate. To me it seemed an enviable fate to have a nightingale singing one to sleep outside one's bedroom window. He looked at me with a tolerant smile. "You like nightingales?" he asked me. "I find them simply a b——y nuisance. You can't sleep for the b——y noise they make." Again and again I have heard Southern Englishmen making the same complaint against the nightingale. Three out of four of them, I am convinced, hate the nightingale as you and I hate our neighbour's wireless set. To them it is a mere agent of insomnia—no more delectable in its music than an amorous cat. I have been amazed at the number of southerners who have confessed to me that they have often gone out at night and thrown stones at nightingales to try to stop them from singing. A nuisance of nightingales is the noun of multitude that would express the attitude of a large part of Southern England to this sweet singer under the moon.

Those of us who were born in harsher climes cannot so easily take a utilitarian view of a bird that has so long been one of the properties of poetry. To us every nightingale is Keats's nightingale; and our chief trouble is not that it keeps us awake, but that we fall asleep before we have heard the end of its song. It is a foreign bird, the very thought of which excites us as we are excited by the thought of a humming-bird or a bird of Paradise. There are several reasons for being glad that one was not born in the south of England. One of them is that one retains an infinite capacity on a still moonlight night for enjoying listening to nightingales, and the more noise they make the better.

Now in the morning one wakes to the more vigorous accents of the chaffinch. Not a romantic singer, perhaps, but what a getting-up-in-the-morning energy he scatters in the air before the curtains are drawn! How pleasant it is to lie in bed with the breakfast-tray at one's side and listen to his industrious music! Of all English birds he is the most insuppressible. What the country people call the blackthorn winter may blow its worst from the east or the north and may silence nine-tenths of the birds of England, but the chaffinch sings, not merely by the weather, but according to the calendar. He is as faithful in his time-keeping as an old peace-time lamplighter. The most defiant of birds, he defies even the English climate. This year he seems to have survived the hardness of a particularly hard winter in greater numbers than ever, so that the garden has become a garden of chaffinches.

This makes life, as seen from a deckchair, on a

Sunday afternoon unusually interesting, for two of the chaffinches are noble fighters. They climb the air, beak to beak, as if about to claw each other to pieces—gamecocks in miniature. If one of them alights beside the bird-bath, another challenges his right to the water, and the two of them resume their endless and uninjurious sparring-match as though fighting were the chief occupation of life. I disapprove of birds fighting; but what can I do? If they insist on fighting, one can only lie back in one's chair and enjoy the spectacle. After all, there are many things in nature of which one disapproves; even butterflies seem to quarrel. Bats get entangled in women's hair—or are said to do so—but who would like to see the world depopulated of bats? Adders have a poisonous bite, but how lovely a sight is an angry adder on a warm summer's day!

Still, the peace of nature is preferable, perhaps, even to its hostilities. The orange-tipped butterfly, opening and shutting its wings as it rests on a flower, the hum of bees, the ingratiating song of the willow-wren, cherry-blossom, the blue of violets and forget-me-nots—these things are at least as pleasant on a Sabbath afternoon as the ways of chaffinches and butterflies.

There are those who desire change as summer approaches, who believe that the human system is in danger of breakdown unless it is pampered with prolonged holidays and who are never happier than when for a fee of three guineas an eminent doctor tells them: "What you need is a change." They feel better already at the prospect of leaving one dot on the map for another. I have long believed that this need of a change—at least, in the temperate zone—is largely imaginary. Nature sees to it that here we have plenty of change, even if we remain from the 1st of January to the 31st of December in the same place. We change from shivering to sweating, from being wet through to being on the verge of heatstroke, with a bewildering rapidity that seldom allows us for more than a week or two to enjoy the pleasures of monotony. The very vegetables and fruits that we eat at table alter with the seasons, and novelty invades our lives with the first spring cabbage. Under the rationing system our allowance of meat brings into our existence a recurrent element of surprise. Will it be eatable or fit only for mincing? Will there be kidneys this week? Even in restaurants there is none of the old dullness of certainty about food. As a result we are braced up to a mood of constant expectancy, hope conflicting with fear. There are men whose outlook on life is changed by finding that it is possible to buy a chocolate biscuit in the buffet car of a railway train. To-day is seldom like yesterday. Elusive chocolate, elusive whisky turns up unexpectedly and produces a more eureka-ish sense of betterment than if one found oneself on the coast of Cornwall.

As for the appearance of the world in May what greater change could we ask than is provided every day—almost every hour—by this? No man has much need of any other kind of change who lives near a garden. Blossom follows blossom in too grievously hasty a succession. Already the almond has vanished, giving way to the lilac. The plum-blossom is scattered in the wind, and the apple is now in flower. Bluebells in the woods are taking the place of primroses, and in the flower-beds the daffodils, the narcissus, the tulip, and the wallflowers hurry towards their ends that will be the beginnings of something which will be, if not better, at least different. The nightingales, if you are annoyed by them, must be admitted to have one virtue: they will soon be silent. The cuckoo, if he exasperates your ear, will not sing for ever. There was once a philosopher who altered Walter Savage Landor's moving line to:

Nature I loathed, and next to Nature Art.

Art, it is to be feared, remains invariable except in the imagination of the recipient. Nature, on the other hand, however loathsome, does not remain loathsome for long. May will pass with its sun and its moon, its lilacs and its nightingales, and you who are pessimistic will have all the change you desire. Let us at least be tolerant of this noisy and over-painted month of the year. It will not last for ever. Y.Y.

SPRING

I come again with greetings new,
To tell you day is well begun;
To say the leaves are fresh with dew
And dappled in the early sun;

To tell you how the forest stirs
In every branch of every brake,
And what an April thirst is hers,
With every whistling bird awake;

To say, as yesterday, once more,
With love as passionate and true
My heart is ready as before
For serving happiness and you;

To tell how over every thing
Delight is blowing on the air—
I know not yet what I shall sing;
I only know the song is there.

ALEXANDER FET
(translated by Frances Cornford)

THE MOVIES

"The Man Who Came to Dinner," at Warner's. "The New Teacher," at the Tatler.

The Man Who Came to Dinner was a brilliantly diverting play (it is still, by the way, to be seen at the Savoy) and the only thing to be feared about the film was that Hollywood might try to improve on stage methods. Luckily, though the screen version lasts some two hours, there has been no attempt at elaboration. The Warner picture provides a bevy of stars, but virtually repeats the success of the theatre. The Woolcott legend—with Monty Woolly at the hub, in his original part—keeps an astringency that is fresh and at moments endearing; there is something of Volpone, something also of Lola Monteza about this monster of the American social scene. He can, and does, insult, bully, blackmail all those he comes across; but it is done with grandeur. A few nice touches have been added to his repertoire as the unwanted guest. Besides the penguins and the avalanche of telephone calls that deck his presence, there is a luncheon when the house is suddenly filled with ranks of beaming black-coated Chinese who overflow into the bathroom. Good though Mr. Morley is at the Savoy there is more coloratura and well-tested bounce about Mr. Monty Woolly's performance. And the rest of the cast are incomparably bolder: Bette Davis trimming herself to the perfect secretary who fights back, Ann Sheridan as the embodiment of oomph, "Schnozzle" Durante as a Hollywood joker in checks. They have the advantage, among other things, of being American, and the dialogue is made to rasp and coo as it should. Two hours is a long stretch for wise-cracking round one man in a bathchair, but the situation holds, even for those who have seen the play.

The Restoration manners of *The Man Who Came to Dinner* would profoundly shock, I am sure, the director and actors of *The New Teacher*. There is a core of moral earnestness to this story of village education which ensures a happy ending and no trifling with ideals for all concerned. The new teacher comes back from Moscow to his old village and starts to convert everyone, young and old, to the wonders of education. A school is built, question bees hum, and matriculation becomes an event comparable with harvest time. *The New Teacher* might easily have been doctrinaire and priggish; in fact, good acting and a casual but touching tale of simple lives makes this film unusually enjoyable. What it lacks in finish it makes up in an unexaggerated and surprising fidelity to human nature. How well and awkwardly the characters in *The New Teacher* meet, talk, fall in love, grind at their jobs, dance and moon about in the evenings! Russian directors have always believed in the unselfconsciousness of their material, and whether this is achieved by skilful acting or by the use of actors who have never seen a camera before, the result is the same: all the people in *The New Teacher* seem to have been caught in off-moments when they are merely being themselves. I found this naturalness very refreshing. There could hardly be a sharper contrast than is provided by a visit to these two films, the one with its glossy surface of enamel, the other all warts and daylight. Both methods are justified, but the Russian film (already three years old) wears better. WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Big Top," at His Majesty's

Mr. Herbert Farjeon's name on the programme may have raised hopes too high. Farjeon and Cochran together ought to have produced, even in war-time, the revue to out-dazzle and out-wit all others. *Big Top* disappoints. It treads rather heavily over old revue ground. Rationing seems severe. There is not nearly enough wit or fun in the sketches, the tunes are agreeable without being catchy, only the Young Ladies travelling from South America to India seem to go coupon-free. Too often, in fact, the (comparatively) lavish scene turns out to be the sort of thing Mr. Farjeon has been parodying for years. But there are joys. Miss Beatrice Lillie makes her exits and her entrances; she has merely to melt into a grin or bump into someone for *Big Top* to reach the heights. Broadcasting confidences from a box at the ballet, sampling medicine-coloured wines in Soho, trilling bird songs at a window and looking for the property flower that can be picked, stalking in candlelight as a Lady Macbeth with a glengarry and two black plaits—all her moments are delicious, and Fred Emney and Cyril Ritchard evolve jokes out of nothing, too. Without Miss Lillie the "Mockbeth" would fall rather flat, Gielgud & Co. being still on their way to London, and the Shakespearean parody being of the kind that every revue includes for the sake of culture. The best parodies of the evening were a "London Song," after Noel Coward, and the visit by a flutey Sunday columnist to a submarine. Otherwise, flicks at the contemporary scene were rare. However, there were pre-war laughs in plenty from an audience that seemed to welcome everything.

Works by Allied Artists at the R.B.A. Galleries, Suffolk Street

The British Council has organised this show (C.E.M.A. assisting) as a tribute to the vitality of our Allies. Inevitably the exhibits have chiefly a token value, for the contemporary art of Europe, apart from France, is not well represented in collections in this country, and the only French exhibitors are Free French now in England. However, the Belgian Ensor, the Czechoslovak Kokoschka and the Norwegian Munch, painters who enjoy European celebrity, are among the exhibitors. The absence of a fuller representation of Norwegian art is specially regrettable—there's only one work by Sorensen—for Norway now has a number of interesting painters. Among the Poles, Zulawski can paint delightfully in the Bonnard tradition. The Free French, though among them is none of the more famous names, reassert the primacy of France in modern art: Oberlé and Gilou are highly accomplished in the Derain tradition; Mella's gouache has a charm slightly in the Jean Hugo style; and Mme. Boris-Malençon handles water-colours feelingly and spontaneously. China is represented by water-colours, Russia by illustrated books. It is a pity that there is nothing by that excellent Greek artist, Varda.

Correspondence

IS AN ELECTION POSSIBLE?

SIR,—I am naturally very interested in "Critic's" comments on the suggestions for reviving Parliament in wartime made recently in my book *Ten Angels Swearing*.

The factors I considered in *Ten Angels Swearing* (the title comes from Lincoln) as part of a general consideration of the future of politics still seem to me valid. They are: (1) There is general agreement that the revival of Parliament by the recruitment of new members is desirable; (2) although a few Independents may be useful the Parliamentary system depends on the existence of strong parties; (3) the

difficulties in the way of anything like a normal General Election in wartime are very great; (4) even if a General Election on the normal lines were possible it would have little validity. The normal purpose of a General Election is to enable the electorate to decide between alternative governments. In war a national Government recruited from the best men of all parties or none is essential.

I therefore put forward the following suggestions: (1) That for the purposes of a wartime election we should consider a system of spread-over elections under which a percentage of Members, say a third, should go to the country at a time so that the work of Parliament would at no time be wholly intensified. (2) Ministers should not take part in the elections and should continue to hold their seats in order not to interrupt the course of government and because they are presumably the best team at present available to the Prime Minister from outside as well as inside Parliament and from all parties. I added, however, that the new Parliament might well soon throw up new members of ministerial rank. (3) That although candidates should be nominated by the existing parties they should fight on personal rather than Party qualifications because the Party ticket loses much of its electoral significance when the issue to be determined is not as it nominally is a choice between alternative governments. In such circumstances, I suggested that the National Register with the right to vote by post where necessary would provide what was needed and might indeed lead to a more reasoned and less emotional approach to electors than usual.

I suggested this in preference to the system of ration cards and the right to vote wherever one happened to be living, which "Critic" prefers because there have been temporarily such great transfers of population that this latter system might involve too large a swing-over in many constituencies for the national and local party organisations to stomach. And since the agreement of the party organisations is a necessary preliminary to any attempt to revive the personnel of Parliament on an effective scale it seemed to me best not to advocate a scheme which was practically certain of their opposition from the start. Naturally these suggestions were—and are—only put forward as a basis for discussion. The important thing is agreement on *some* scheme which will give us a better Parliamentary representation while the war is still on.

Holmbury St. Mary FRANCIS WILLIAMS.

SIR,—Your letter to Sir Claude Holbrook concludes ". . . The first step is for the Labour Party to renounce the electoral truce." It is noteworthy that the argument leading up to this statement does not rule out the suggestion made in *The Economist* of May 9th—"that it may be necessary for all the old parties to break up and be reformed."

However, we can certainly agree that our political future is in the melting-pot; surely, too, that there is a large-sized job of work which the Labour Party cannot do, even though it should renounce the electoral truce. Mr. Arthur Greenwood, in his kindly comments on the Priestley-Acland-Wintringham Nine-Point Programme, admitted as much.

There are literally millions of people, amounting perhaps to 200 to 250 constituencies, outside the ranks of organised Labour, who are desperately anxious to achieve a more speedy and complete victory by moving towards the sort of world that Cripps, Eden and Lyttelton have recently been describing. They realise—as at least one of that powerful trio realised a long time ago—that quite fundamental changes are necessary: vital democracy, economic and social as well as political; the operative question in our economic life to be—"Does the community need it and are the materials and labour available?" instead of "Will it pay a particular section of the community?"

The initiative of the "Nine-Point Policy for Ordinary People" taken by Priestley, Acland, Wintringham and others, and now much more widely supported, aims at meeting at least some of the needs inherent in the situation described. The ultimate objective is, of course, to quote again from your letter to Sir Claude Holbrook and from *The Economist:* "To join these forces of the Left together" and "an alignment of men according to genuine principles."

As a means to this end we believe that the Constituency Committees called for in the Nine-Point Declaration are needed immediately—for by-elections when they arise and, more important, to start preparing for the next General Election. We are anxious to hear from all individuals, groups and organisations who will honestly help in such a task. Funds are needed, too, not to forge a new party chain, but to make possible the friendly and informal but none-the-less effective co-operation for which we are striving.

G. RAYMOND GAUNTLETT
(For the signatories—Nine-Point Declaration)

Terminal House,
London, S.W.1.

THE BITTER-ENDERS

SIR,—The old saying that disciples very often excel their masters has once again been proved by Mr. Adam Pragier's letter, which you published on May 2nd. Whereas Lord Vansittart told an American broadcaster in March that he estimates that 25 per cent. of all Germans are "good Germans" (to use Lord Vansittart's definition), Mr. Pragier on the other hand goes too far in his case by denying that there is "any sabotage or underground fighting" by Germans in Germany. One wonders if Mr. Pragier has ever heard of the accounts of Mr. Jan Stancyk, the leader of the Polish miners and now Polish Minister of Labour, regarding the underground struggle of the Silesian miners, whom he has assisted for years. One might also ask if Mr. Pragier has ever found a means of reading underground reports which have reached Labour circles and Governments in this country, or if he has ever tried to see and check reports quoted from German papers and reproduced in official publications such as those of the Polish Government.

How can Mr. Pragier attempt to educate other people to face the "real truth" if he has obviously not seen these reports?

In misunderstanding the title you selected for Mr. Loeb's letter, Mr. Pragier illustrates only too clearly how continental socialists of a certain school of thought, who call themselves "realists," can miss the point. I have seen some of the reliable reports available in this country, and it would seem that the psychological situation in Germany since December or January, at least in German factories, is as follows: most of the workers Lord Vansittart would term as "good Germans" have not yet joined the active anti-Nazi minority who have been fighting against Hitler for years, but there is in these circles an ever-growing tendency to move towards the active opposition. The reports regarding the assistance given by German civilians to foreign workers, prisoners of war and Jews are becoming more frequent, and the Nazi press has had to put up a stronger fight against this tendency. Hitler's speech seems to indicate that this opposition is on a much larger scale than I dared to conclude from the available reports. In any case, Hitler is trying to put a stop to the *rapprochement* of the "good Germans" with the active opposition groups by telling the active German opposition that if they do not obey his orders and are discovered, they will be killed. Goebbels, on the other hand, is telling them that if they do not obey Hitler's orders and are not discovered, being perhaps even successful in stabbing the Nazis in the back, even then, after the war, they will inevitably be stabbed in the back by the allied nations. This is the point on which you

Bring out your dead

PAPER

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JONATHAN CAPE

laid emphasis in your comment on Mr. Loeb's letter.

Mr. Pragier's further remarks prove nothing against your comments on post-war economy on a European scale, but his remarks ignore entirely the admirable contribution of Polish socialists regarding the theory of imperialism—a helpful explanation of some German events, too—and also ignore the facts regarding the development since 1939 of heavy industry in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Germany.

Kempston, Bedford. WALTER AUERBACH

CHILD CRUELTY

SIR,—You doubt whether the "appalling picture" of child cruelty presented in Miss Baillie's letter "represents common practice and attitude of mind."

That it does I can vouch for from my own experience, and although the instances that, by reason of their horror, have remained in my mind as a countryman born and bred occurred long before there were such people as evacuees, there is no reason to suppose, from what I have seen of them, that the country children of to-day differ in that respect. In fact, I very much doubt whether town-bred children *would* be cruel to country birds and animals without the tuition of their rural cousins. Since the cruelty of the latter arises less from a wanton desire to hurt than from a blind ignorance of (and therefore a total lack of respect for) the interest and beauty of the wild life around them, it has always seemed an amazing thing to me that the school authorities make no effort to instil an appreciation of these things into the children at an age when it would do them most good, and spare many a bird, hedgehog and snake the agony of torture and slow death.

I shall never forget the wrathy look I received from a Canadian lad, with whom I was walking in the Bush, when I asked him if he was interested in birds-nesting. The taboo on this pastime, at all events in Quebec, has resulted in a greater degree of trust between bird and man. On the other hand, it was in this same Province that the S.P.C.A. lost an action against a farmer for driving a nail into a cow to prevent its giving birth to a calf at an inconvenient moment. The Society lost the action on the ground that, in the magistrate's opinion, this was common practice among farmers and he could not see his way to interfering.

AIRCRAFTMAN

SIR,—Margaret W. Baillie's letter gave me the hasty idea that when the adult world is hating and bloody, it seems natural that small kids should become sadistic. Then I recalled that boys in my class at a Scots village school often slew young birds barbarously at a time when all was peace. I thought again that the war has not made any of my pupils sadistic, so that the war cannot be blamed. Taking sadism to be the negative side of sex and of love, and assuming that sadism can only exist in an unhappy person, is it possible for Miss Baillie to tell us what kind of an environment gives these children a hate of life and love of self? Only by finding the cause can the cure be prescribed. Obviously lectures or punishments would be futile and wrong: doing helps, but talking never. So that the question isn't one of why those kids are cruel: rather is it the much larger one . . . what are their homes like, their schools? Are they spanked or caned, i.e., are they treated sadistically by adults? What inhibits their creative activities so that they can only use the destructive perversion?

Your own comments on the letter, Mr. Editor, are unhelpful. Is any talk on the B.B.C. going to cure an act that is unconsciously motivated? Such would simply add to the conscience that every sadist has, and heaven knows how evil a thing a conscience can be.

Summerhill School Ltd. A. S. NEILL
Festiniog, N. Wales.

[Talks and lessons do not change unconscious desire. But Mr. Neill makes a common error, refuted by everyday experience, in suggesting that they must necessarily be incapable of effecting immediately useful changes in behaviour.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

G. T. GARRATT

SIR,—Mr. Edward Thompson's article brings Geoffrey Garratt vividly before his friends. There is one point at which, however, I seem to hear a mild expletive from the shades. Geoffrey was, in his gentle way, amazed at those "Leftists" who had shouted so loudly for war, and were, subsequently, to be found, in the snuggest places, voluntarily doing as little as possible about it. For himself he took the line from the beginning that, as he was one of the first and most insistent to urge that Fascism must be fought, and both on the Abyssinian and the Spanish issue, so, when war came to this country, he must be one of the first to take as active as possible a part in the war, and not preach it, or leave it, to younger men. So he went on and on, trying and trying again, until he succeeded in getting back into the Army—no easy achievement, at his age, as others who have tried in vain know. At times, subsequently, he felt keenly, however, that one saw more active service in the Wardens' service, for instance, in London during a blitz, than in the Army in England.

He took the view that men of his age should and could, in some cases, be used in the front line as the first cannon-fodder—to save, in some measure, the rising generation.

He went to endless trouble to help the men whom he commanded in their many individual problems; and the experience which he had gained of social service during years of work in Cambridgeshire enabled him to be of great use to them.

In a letter written a few weeks ago, in which he describes very vividly his life in the Army—including his "Temperamentvoll German Jews"—he says that it is a good enough show, if you are young enough to be in a commando—and I am sure that he meant it. Geoffrey Garratt was a "veray parfit gentil knight," with an amused guffaw and a quick and mildly Rabelaisian jest for anyone who might have suggested it. It was characteristic that none of us knew about the M.B.E. until after his death.

Let us hope that in the world which we are going to build there will be less room for the "yes-men" and the mere toe-ers of Party lines, and more room for the Geoffrey Garratts.

The County Hall, L. L'ESTRANGE MALONE
London, S.E.1.

CHRISTIANITY AT SCHOOL

SIR,—Does Mrs. Amabel Williams-Ellis really think that the House of Lords, the Protestant Churches and the Minister of Education are in favour of making children in elementary schools "hear sermons" for two forty-minute periods each week? Has Mrs. Amabel Williams-Ellis ever studied The Cambridgeshire Syllabus of Religious Teaching in Schools, 1939? Apparently not, or she would not so naively equate "Religious Instruction" with the "imparting of maxims" and "direct exhortation." The fact is that religious instruction nowadays has little or nothing to do with such antiquated theories as that goodness can be produced by imparting maxims. But it has yet to be shown that goodness cannot be produced by imparting to children a proper and reasonable understanding of the historic truths of Christianity and that is what modern syllabuses aim to do. And anyone who takes the trouble to study a good modern syllabus will soon see that "religious instruction" nowadays in no way falls behind the other subjects of the curriculum in its use of approved modern methods of teaching. Nor is it merely a matter of the Protestant Churches, though they naturally have taken a lead. The teachers themselves are intensely interested in religious instruction and training courses in it are invariably well attended.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

In his book on W. W. Story, Henry James introduces an account of Landor with a fine passage about pursuing the traces of illustrious men :

> Strange and special the effect, in Italy, of the empty places (and they are many) that we stand and wonder in to-day for the sake of the vanished, the English poets ; the irresistible reconstruction, to the all but baffled vision, of unrecoverable presences and aspects, the conscious, shining, mocking void, sad somehow with excess of serenity . . . There they still stand, at any rate, the old cool houses—Peschatelli, Belvedere, Spanocchi-Sergardi, Alberti, Gori, Borghese—on their communicating slopes, behind their overclambered walls and their winding accommodating lanes ; there they stand in the gladness of their gardens (congruous haunts of delightfully named young gardeners, Adone and Narciso) and in that wondrous mountain ring which seems to contract and expand, as with the time of day and the state of the air, colour deepens or swoons.

These words now have a new melancholy, for the houses and graves of Keats, Shelley, and Landor are unattainable by us, in the re-enslaved country whose liberty was so close to their hearts. But as one who loves Italy only less than France, I find in Landor's lovely sense of the Italian scene something of the pleasure tasted by the enviable James as he wandered among the Tuscan villas.

> I often wished myself away, thinking of friends in Florence, of music, of painting, of our villegiatura at the vintage-time, whether in the green and narrow glades of Pratolino, with lofty trees above us, and little rills unseen, and little bells about the necks of sheep and goats, tinkling together ambiguously ; or amid the grey quarries or under the majestic walls of ancient Fiesole ; or down in the woods of the Doccia, where the cypresses are of such a girth that, when a youth stands against one of them, and a maiden stands opposite, and they clasp it, their hands at the time do little more than meet. Beautiful scenes, on which Heaven smiles eternally, how often has my heart ached for you ! He who hath lived in this country can enjoy no distant one. He breathes here another air ; he lives more life ; a brighter sun invigorates his studies, and serener stars influence his repose.

Browning alone has written of Italy with equal feeling.

> A bearded old man, shabby as a beggar, throwing his dinner out of the window, abandoned by his affluent children to the care of strangers—such was the Lear-like end of Landor, the heir of great estates as well as one of the greatest writers of his time. Though subject to no sordid dissipation, he may be thought the architect of his own misfortunes, a man dilapidated by an excess no less of generosity than of arrogance. Ill luck has dogged him beyond the grave. It is not merely that he is less read, I think, than any other writer of his stature. This he would not resent : " If I had a thousand readers I should be quite out of conceit with myself—for it is impossible that so large a body of people can judge correctly of what is excellent." " I shall dine late, he prophesied, " but the dining-room will be well-lighted, the guests few but select." The guests are doubtless select, but the dining-room is lit only by smoky tapers—there is no good book on Landor. Forster's Life is a wretched affair ; Sidney Colvin's, in the English Men of Letters series, is honourable but ill-informed. And now comes Mr. Malcolm Elwin,* who has evidently taken great trouble, with disappointing results. Mr. Elwin is remarkable for neither style nor judgment. St. Paul, he informs us,
>
> > realised that Christ advocated monogamy to handicap profligacy and as the only means of supporting children in a capitalist state. Paul could not quiet his conscience to preach a political expedient as a moral principle, and compromised . . . by describing his own unmarried condition as the ideal state . . . Obviously he meant by the ideal state a condition of enlightened culture in which the individual could be trusted with unfettered liberty and independence, men and women meeting in free attraction, without the indignity of economic liability.

* *Savage Landor*. By Malcolm Elwin. *Macmillan*, 18*s*.

Apart from the intrinsic interest of this to the connoisseur of silliness, the lack of any historic sense it displays is specially unlucky in an author writing about a figure so deeply soaked as Landor in the past. Mr. Elwin, moreover, is negligent : he says (p. 82) that food never appealed to Landor, and on pp. 175, 269 and 367 provides strong evidence to the contrary. Pages 221 and 222 are similarly inconsistent. To prolong such criticisms would not be difficult, but I remember Landor's warning : " In our censures we are less apt to consider the benefit we may confer than the ingenuity we may display." I will therefore content myself with pointing out that what Mr. Elwin calls Landor's fads in pronunciation—" goolden," " yaller," " laylock "—were not personal eccentricities but uses customary in Whig society. And now I must add that all admirers of Landor will have to read this exasperating work, for Mr. Elwin, while pandering to the popular dislike of scholarship by omitting his references, has included much material that was suppressed by Forster or unknown to him.

Landor is the most naturally classical of English writers. Some of the sentiments—in *Pericles and Aspasia*, for instance—belong, I agree, to Greuze or to Lady Blessington's *Book of Beauty*. (Landor often inflicts his maidens with a priggery that lightens into an even more tiresome archness.) But the setting and the diction are unparalleled in English. Arbutus and dittany, garlands and porticoes and fountains, are not to Landor the frigid literary apparatus of the eighteenth century poetaster—they are indigenous to the climate of his mind. Though never in Sicily, he recognised in the Tuscan groves the ways of life and the images with which Theocritus had caught his schoolboy imagination. These he made his own, so that alike in prose and verse he writes " under where red Priapus rears His club amid the junipers." He lived in Italy from 1815 to 1835, and again from 1859 to his death in 1864. During the interval he chose Bath for his home, where the pillars of the Royal Crescent and the colonnade of the Circus echoed the grandeur of the Italian scene, giving to his language the serenity lacking in his life.

> Many a froward axiom, many an inhumane thought, hath arisen from sitting inconveniently, from hearing a few unpleasant sounds, from the confinement of a gloomy chamber, or from the want of symmetry in it. We are not aware of this, until we find an exemption from it in groves, on promontories, or along the sea-shore, or wherever else we meet Nature face to face, undisturbed and solitary.

Extravagantly impetuous and undisciplined, Landor was never out of trouble. He volunteered as a private in the Spanish army to fight dictatorship ; he involved himself, less engagingly, in debts and law-suits ; he drove his wife into a querulous hypochondria ; he spoiled his children only to earn their contempt. The catalogue of his follies is tedious. He was the most easily angered of men, though he placed politeness among the cardinal virtues. It is fair to add that Emerson, who from hearsay had gained " an impression of Achillean wrath—an untameable petulance," found, as others did, that " courtesy veiled that haughty mind, and he was the most patient and gentle of hosts."

Since we do not suffer from the violences of the man, why is Landor so little frequented a writer ? For one thing, his opinions in themselves gain him no adherents. A republican who liked to call himself a Conservative, he despised democracy as vigorously as he hated tyranny ; he had neither faith in Christianity nor zeal in scepticism. In literature, similarly, he was no partisan. Out of loyalty to Southey, with almost all of whose opinions he disagreed, he attacked Byron ; when Wordsworth complained that the prose of the *Imaginary Conversations* was too full of images, he retorted, all too crushingly, that while prose would bear a great deal of poetry, poetry would sink and swoon under a moderate rate of prose. He refused to meet Shelley—to his subsequent deep regret ; Browning looked after his old age, and applauded in his work the display of " the rarest intellectual powers that were ever brought together in one man." Yet it is difficult not to see a glance at Browning in the following lines :

> The pastoral pipe hath dropt its mellow lay,
> And shepherds in their contests only try
> Who best can puzzle. Come, Theocritos,
> Come, let us lend a shoulder to the wheel
> And help to lift it from this depth of sand.

A second obstacle to Landor's popularity is that he wrote much too much. From the four large volumes of his verse in the Chapman and Hall collected edition only some twenty poems exquisitely emerge—masterpieces in a studio littered with abandoned attempts, improvised sketches and completed failures. Though born in 1775—five years later than Wordsworth—Landor is situated by his classical tastes with an earlier generation. These few flawless poems represent indeed what the eighteenth century might have attained, if it had raised a poet with gifts comparable to those of Fragonard and of Haydn. His prose also is most easily enjoyed in such an anthology as that made with exemplary taste by Professor Ernest de Selincourt for the World's Classics. But this contains only prose ; and moreover there is room for another volume of shorter extracts from the less consistently good *Conversations* and from *Pericles and Aspasia*. Landor is always breaking into magnificent and Pentelican phrases. Here are a few :

> The voice comes deepest from the sepulchre, and a great name has its roots in the dead body.
>
> There is a gloom in deep love, as in deep water : there is a silence in it which suspends the foot, and the folded arms and the dejected head are the images it reflects.
>
> The very beautiful rarely love at all. Those precious images are placed above the reach of the Passions. Time alone is permitted to efface them ; Time, the father of the gods, and even *their* consumer.
>
> We fancy we suffer from ingratitude, while in reality we suffer from self-love.
>
> A bell warbles the more mellifluously in the air when the sound of the stroke is over, and when another swings out from underneath it, and pants upon the element that gives it birth. In like manner the recollection of a thing is frequently more pleasing than the actuality ; what is harsh is dropped in the space between.

Landor's prodigality in such reflections discovers in him vast powers of intellect, of observation, of poetic imagination and of verbal music. Yet one cannot read Landor for long at a time. It is as if wisdom and beauty required the alloy of a baser metal. The most essential quality in writing, I believe, is that each sentence should make one eager to read its successor ; and Landor rarely achieved this. The personages, whether consuls or cardinals, virgins or courtesans, are as unvarious as caryatids. Each speaks with the voice of Landor, and every period is static and final. " How sculptural," we exclaim, " how melodious, how profound ! " and, as we say this, a tom-tit outside the window or even a newspaper on a chair distracts our attention. I, at least, never open a volume of Landor without being startled by his excellence—and never put it down without a shameful feeling of release. But, in the interim, I have been upon the heights. Though the rarity of the air may have been exhausting, I have moved through sunlit spaces where the only shadows are cast by olive-trees and the steles of heroes ; courage and benignity have been made graceful to me so that I have understood the Hellenic tie between goodness and beauty ; I have witnessed the embraces of athletes and hamadryads, and profited by the hopes of poets, the disillusionment of statesmen ; I have heard a music in the Lydian mode and bees hesitant above the thyme ; and I have brought back to the daily untidiness of life some vestiges of insight into a world august, and none the less valid for being imaginary, in which wise men and laughing girls converse upon Olympus, anticipating our proudest wishes for a more civil and delightful destiny.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE INNOCENT HEART

The Innocent Heart: The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth. Edited by ERNEST DE SELINCOURT. *Macmillan.* 2 vols. 36*s.*

What Walter Pater called *diaphanéité* is a rare quality in human beings, but rarer still in writers, who are apt to be complicated folk. Self-consciousness, that dose of poison which stings into life the poetic organ, is also the enemy of transparency; poetry and innocence can only exist side by side when the latter is something positive—an incandescent flame—not a mere negation. Thus, the available examples, if illustrious, are few: Blake, Shelley, Hölderlin perhaps, Dorothy Wordsworth, Emily Dickinson. One cites with extreme diffidence, for the point is so delicate it threatens to snap under the slightest pressure. Yet it provides, I believe, the clue to Dorothy Wordsworth's genius—her goodness, her ineffable charm. One reads the famous passage in which she describes how, while her beloved William was being married, she threw herself in agony on her bed, "neither hearing nor seeing anything"—reads and wonders that so consuming a jealousy should have been so perfectly dissolved by affection, that the three could thereafter live together in amity for years. Such spiritual triumphs deserve a richer reward than poor Dorothy was ever to know; Wordsworth's calm acceptance of her love had something selfish about it: she had always to be content with the second-best, until her fiery spirit, deprived of fuel, sank into a confused darkness which only lifted to give her an occasional glimpse of brightness—a bird on the sill in a patch of sunshine, the tender leaves along a spring bough—and an intermittent poignancy of expression which makes the last letter she ever wrote one of the most touchingly beautiful in all literature.

Such natures are born to make poetry from ordinary, quotidian things. In this sense Dorothy was really nearer to earth than her brother, whose view of poetry and poetic diction probably owe more to Dorothy's influence than he ever admitted. It is this exquisite plainness and directness that give to her journals their silverpoint quality, so that the commonest scene, the simplest series of actions, achieve the timelessness of art.

> It is almost 10 o'clock, a quiet night. The fire flutters, and the watch ticks. I hear nothing else save the breathing of my beloved, and he now and then pushes his book forward, and turns over a leaf. Fletcher is not come home. No letter from C[oleridge].

How those last two sentences—insignificant in themselves—heighten what has gone before! Professor Knight did wrong to omit them (and many like them) from his edition, for any attempt to anthologise these journals destroys their effect, which results as much from the accumulation of little things—a sore thumb, the price of potatoes, William's tongue furred or Dorothy's bowels bad, washing day, socks mended, letters fetched, and so on—as from the more extended descriptions of nature and scenery for which they are famous.

And justly famous. Unlike the romantic poets, with their feverish restlessness, the Wordsworths had a home which they liked well enough to stay in for protracted periods; so that there is no book in which, as in Dorothy's Grasmere journal, one can trace in subtler detail the transition from one season of the year to another. For nothing escapes her eyes; she observes the form and colour of some tiny flower with the same minute attention she devotes to the garments of a begging sailor met on the road. To the innocent of heart all appearances are on the same level of interest. The result—for us—is delightful but also startling, as in the poems and remarks of Emily Dickinson, who shared Dorothy Wordsworth's genius for precise observation, as well as other qualities of mind and heart. To compare the lives and works of these two women is at all points instructive.

Professor de Selincourt's volumes contain all Dorothy's extant journals, as well as her accounts of tours in Scotland and on the Continent. The latter, being written up for publication, are sensibly less interesting than the Grasmere and Alfoxden journals; and they are much too long-winded. The journals contain the essence of her genius, and we could be more grateful to Professor de Selincourt than we actually are only if he had seen fit to indicate what is here published for the first time. Comparison is laborious, but when made reveals that what Knight omitted, apart from references to the perpetual colly-wobbles from which the brother and sister seem to have suffered, was gossip about the neighbours, whose children were presumably still alive at the time Knight prepared his edition. One is glad to have it all at last, and to be given, besides, a rather sharper picture of Dorothy's preoccupation with Coleridge than the old edition permitted to appear.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

MR. LEWIS'S DEVIL

The Screwtape Letters. By C. S. LEWIS. *Bles.* 5*s.*

This book takes the form of a series of letters from a superior devil to a neophyte occupying a lower rung of the infernal hierarchy containing instructions in the art of temptation. To the neophyte's care a human "patient" has been committed, and his job is to wean him from "the Enemy," God, and to win him for "our Father," the devil. The reader and the fiend follow the "patient" on his way through love, conversion to Christianity, backsliding, war and "the blitz." The tempter makes mistakes, attacks on the wrong front, is insufficiently diligent and finally lets his prey slip through his fingers. Hence the letters, with their warnings, advice, threats and final denunciation of an incompetent servant, whose fate is apparently to be devoured by his mentor, "as dainty a morsel as ever I grew fat on."

Mr. Lewis possesses the rare gift of being able to make righteousness readable, and has produced a pretty piece of homily lit by flashes of insight—as for example, that it is not great fatigue that produces anger and peevishness, but "unexpected demands on a man already tired," or that "fatigue makes women talk more and men talk less,"—and occasionally hitting bells of considerable profundity. It strikes me, for example, as both true and profound to point out that we tend as part of the general confusion that darkens our use of the word "reality" to apply the word "real" to the physical facts of an experience that makes us happier and better, and to the spiritual elements in an experience, such as for example, death or hatred, that discourages or corrupts us. It is also, I think, true and profound that hell is all noise and heaven silence plus music, and that the physical sciences, once the enemies of a spiritual view of the universe, are now on the whole friendly to it, while economics and sociology are the new scientific friends of the determinist and the agnostical naturalist.

It must be admitted, too, that the positive point of view from which everything is appraised—"nothing matters at all except the tendency of a given state of mind, in given circumstances, to move a particular patient at a particular moment nearer to the enemy" (God) "or nearer to us," which is the devil's yardstick of value, produces some novel effects. Novel, and also rather surprising; thus from remarks scattered up and down the letters we learn that being gluttonous and delicate in the matter of food, believing that "'being in love' is the only thing that makes marriage either happy or holy," and that we "own" our own "bodies"—a belief specially commended by the fiend as leading to "resistance to chastity"—the alleged repulsion felt by females to bearded males—"there is more in it from the devil's point of view than you might suppose"—the efforts of actresses, dress-makers, advertisers and coiffeuses so to misdirect sexual taste that each sex will be guided away from the partner who is likely to provide a happy and fertile marriage, the conviction that some policies, causes and crusades are good and happiness-promoting, others bad and misery-making, irrespective of any metaphysical *arrière pensée* as to the existence of another world, this last being generalised as the heresy that this World is an end and faith, a means to bettering it—that all these with many more too numerous to mention but including almost all distinctively modern modes of thought, "such as Creative Evolution, Scientific Humanism, or Communism, which fix men's affections on the Future," are devices of the devil, and that those who subscribe to them are doing the devil's work.

Confronted with this formidable list, it is difficult to resist the temptation of putting to Mr. Lewis the question, who he is and what it is that he knows that he should feel himself entitled to rail with such assurance at so many of the beliefs, habits, tastes and foibles of mankind; asserting for example, with such confidence that my belief—a peace-time belief, be it said—that I have "found the only restaurant in town where steaks are really 'properly' cooked," instead of being, as I should have supposed, a harmless self-delusion which gives me pleasure, is in fact censurable as the vice or vanity rationalising the sin of gluttony. Is it perhaps symptomatic that one of the failings of which I can find no adequate treatment in the Letters is that of Pharisaism, in the heart of which there lurks the belief that we were sent into the world to air our moral prejudices?

It is, of course, possible that I am taking too seriously what is after all no more than a *jeu d'esprit* designed as what the publishers call "an amusing novelty in satire," though "the believer," they add, "possibly smiling less, may gather some practical hints about strategy." If this charge were brought, I should defend myself by reference to Mr. Lewis's severe treatment of the vice of flippancy, which he assigns to the lowest rung of the ladder of humour, on the ground that it builds up around a man "the finest armour-plating against the Enemy that I know." I find it difficult to suppose that Mr. Lewis has designed this book as a piece of armour-plating for himself.

Alternatively, one may suspect that one's resentment at the censoriousness of the Letters is due to the fact that they touch off known failings of one's own. One is, after all, a miserable sinner, and it is inevitable that many of Mr. Lewis's shots should, however obliquely, strike home. But then comes the reflection that, in admitting so much, one is perhaps only falling into another error, the error of false humility. Really one's path seems strewn with pitfalls: Mr. Lewis makes the business of living so extraordinarily difficult. Difficult I know that it is, but is it really as difficult as all that?

C. E. M. JOAD

POPE ALEXANDER VI

The Borgia Pope, Alexander VI. By ORESTES FERRARA. *Sheed and Ward.* 16*s.*

Whitewashing historic villains is a thankless job and, in the long run, a waste of time. We prefer Macchiavelli, Mary Stuart and the Borgias as history has painted them. Virtue has few charms for the general public, as Aristides found to his cost. And if any historian is so outraged by injustice that he must attempt it, then he must do so brilliantly or refrain. Nothing that he says will carry conviction; the most that he can hope for is to dazzle.

Corvo's defence of the Borgias was a dazzling performance, both in its courage and its perversity. He had the courage to revive the wise old Catholic dogma that "it is a vulgar error to confuse the man and the office." He had the perversity to suggest that Cesare at least was the son, not of Alexander, but of Alexander's arch-enemy, Pope Julius II. And he developed both themes in a manner that is superb.

For a task so impossible as asking historical judgment to go into reverse over one of history's most fetching villains, Señor Ferrara is too pedestrian. It is easy to show how slight is the evidence for many of the charges brought against the Pope. But that means little one way or another. Borgia's vices were not unusual for a cardinal of his day, and the vices of cardinals had little interest for their contemporaries. The vices

of a Pope were another matter. Then every story, true or false, had its value, and no one would trouble to enquire how solid were the grounds for a good slander. "The Popes of Rome," we are told by Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (himself a Pope), "are almost universally slandered while they live, and praised when they are dead."

As positive proof of innocence Señor Ferrara can produce little. He is too often reduced to mere defence, and that not always very successful. It is no defence of Borgia's incontinence to say that Pius II also had children. So he did, but before he accepted Holy Orders. When at last he was ordained, Piccolomini wrote that he could now contemplate such a step, since health and age had forced him to renounce both Venus and Bacchus. Nor does deductive defence fare much better. Discussing the part played by Borgia in the election of Pius II, Señor Ferrara tells the story of how he was bought by both aspirants to the throne with the promise of the vice-chancellorship, but Piccolomini finally gained his vote by saying that Estouteville had promised the same office to the Cardinal of Avignon. "While we are in the realm of guesswork," says Señor Ferrara, "it is surely more plausible to believe that if Aeneas Silvius had known of his opponent's double promise, he would have told Borgia about it earlier." But we are not in the realm of guesswork. Aeneas Silvius tells this incident himself in his account of his own election (*Commentaries I*, Cod. Reg. 1995, Vatican Library). These are only two examples, which I have chosen because I happen to be competent to judge them. But they throw some doubt on our author's methods in general.

In brief, when in the realm of guesswork (and whitewashing at this distance is almost entirely guesswork) Señor Ferrara plumps for what to him seems most plausible. But the most plausible is not always the truth. To prove Alexander VI a great Pope is not difficult. To prove him a virtuous Pope is harder and, until some concrete evidence can be produced, energy misdirected. So flourishing a myth as that of the Borgia iniquity will not be crushed by guesswork or circumstantial evidence.

FLORA GRIERSON

COBWEBS ON HARDY

Thomas Hardy. By EDMUND BLUNDEN. *Macmillan.* 7s. 6d.

Mr. Blunden remarks, in his account of Thomas Hardy's death, on the inevitable irony of circumstance by which his corpse was cut open, the heart being buried in Stinsford Churchyard, the body in Westminster Abbey. Perhaps a similar irony hangs over this book, which reads at times like an obituary notice in the *Wessex News*. It is surrounded with an atmosphere of cobwebs, part of Mr. Blunden's curious method being to quote amply from the reviews of nearly all Hardy's novels.

We read that the reviewer in *The Spectator* in 1871 found in *Desperate Remedies* "talent of a remarkable kind—sensitiveness to scenic and atmospheric effects, and to their influence on the mind, and the power of rousing similar sensitiveness in his readers." Later in the book we read another quotation from *The Spectator*, this time about *The Dynasts*: "The blank verse tends to be spasmodic and unrhythmical and the lyrics suffer from a deplorable lack of music. The diction is strained, and, when metaphysics begin, we flounder among quasi-technical platitudes. But in spite of a hundred faults, there is a curious sublimity."

For the rest, the earlier part of the book is a narration of the events of Hardy's uneventful life, and the times of publication of his novels. Mr. Blunden's approach is that of the Guide Book. He shows a great deal of tact and discrimination in presenting his material, and his own comments are made in short asides, as though with the purpose of not impeding the visitor's view to the Great Novelist's shrine. The literary pages of periodicals seem to alter remarkably little from year to year, and the respectable critics describe literature much as they might describe cooking: a good novel is a good novel much as a good cake is a good cake, because the cook has used the correct ingredients and utensils; however, sometimes the cake does not "rise," and sometimes it is "heavy": so with Hardy's novels and poems for about thirty years, until some dirt began to get into the kitchen, and then the critics were outraged.

Viewing Hardy in this way, one has very little sense of development, or of psychology. However, there is something to be said for Mr. Blunden's method. I am fully persuaded from his book that Hardy's life was remarkably dull, and this being so, reviews must have been very important events in it. As a matter of fact they were, because he was even more sensitive than most writers to adverse criticism. When we have finished three-quarters of Mr. Blunden's book, we do have the impression not of a passage through time, but rather of one across an almost featureless landscape. Disappointing as it is to have to put up with "*The Trumpet Major* also pleased most of the reviewers, and drew from *The Athenæum* the compliment . . . ." etc., as Mr. Blunden's contribution to criticism on what many people consider one of Hardy's best novels, nevertheless, if he had intruded more, we would perhaps have got more of the feeling of Mr. Blunden, and less the curious bare cosiness of Hardy's own world. One cannot help feeling, at the end, that Hardy himself would have "perused" (to use the verb he would have chosen) these pages with lively pleasure and interest: all the remarks that people made about his books, the criticisms in the press, the atmosphere of misunderstanding, yet all the time the growth of his own reputation like a huge tree, which had no relation to what people said about his books, and yet invisibly and invincibly grew.

In the last quarter of the book Mr. Blunden overcomes his modesty and writes with real perception of Hardy's poems. These poems—there are 918 of them—certainly require a guide for the uninitiated. One needs to have their beauties pointed out, and here Mr. Blunden is quite excellent. He is sensitive to what is best in the poems, and he ruthlessly exorcises the bad. Indeed, he goes so far as to say that nine-tenths of the poems might well be forgotten. He wishes that Hardy were one of those classics most of whose works have been mercifully lost in antiquity.

In these last pages Mr. Blunden tactfully introduces the names of Robert Browning and John Milton. However, he does not press the suggested association forward to the point of comparison. Had he done so, this book might have been more searching, both as literary criticism and as psychology, though perhaps the truly devastating note should not be struck in the "English Men of Letters" series. Yet the fact remains that the comparison between Hardy's narrative poems and Browning's *Dramatic Lyrics*, immediately draws attention to Hardy's peculiar isolation from the main European tradition of literature. His gift was tremendous, but its development lies too much in the way of idiosyncrasy, and it is impossible to relate his achievement to that of another artist, such as Browning, who had perhaps a less interesting mind, a less audacious vision, without stumbling against something in Hardy's work which cannot stand up against the standards which Browning and Milton set themselves. Mr. Blunden never goes really into the question of Hardy's amateurishness, though he skirts it several times. Condemning his novels almost wholesale this biography suggests the conclusion that Hardy

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would have been one of the greatest English poets had he devoted himself entirely to poetry. No one can read the astonishing poem "We Are Getting to the End," written at the end of his own life, without realising that here is a quality of insight that other members of his generation in literature never attained. Perhaps Hardy wrote novels because poetry had already become too much a hole-in-the-corner occupation in his time for so broad and human a talent. The main literary vehicle was the novel, and he must needs attempt it, uncomfortable as the journey was. *The Dynasts* suggests that he might have invented—indeed, did for the purposes of that one masterpiece improvise—a new medium, the dramatised poetic novel. His greatness lies in that and in the poems, with their peculiar flavour, which will always have a message and a meaning, often imperfectly fused into their texture.

STEPHEN SPENDER

RAIL OR ROAD?

Road and Rail. By GILBERT WALKER. *Allen and Unwin.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The controversy between road and rail transport is temporarily in abeyance owing to the war. But the issues underlying it remain to be solved, whether after the war our transport services are publicly or privately owned. It it possible to imagine a system of fixed transport charges from any one point to any other, the method of carriage being left to be settled by a unified transport authority without reference to the wishes of the consigner of the goods. But even this would not do away with the conflict between the alternative methods of transport, unless firms and individuals were prevented from carrying their own goods by road, as well as from plying for hire. Under the existing system, the "C" licensees who carry their own goods are much more numerous and own many more vehicles than the "A" and "B" licensees put together. It is hardly to be anticipated that any plan of coordination will forcibly prevent traders from carrying their own goods, even if it does go to the length of making the railway companies and the regular road hauliers entirely non-competitive for the future. Accordingly, no practicable plan of road-rail combination will eliminate road competition altogether, though of course the conditions of obtaining licences might be so stiffened up as to discourage firms from operating their own lorries.

Mr. Gilbert Walker does not stand for the creation of an inland transport monopoly, even within these limits. He sets much store by preserving the principle of competition within a coordinated system. The form of coordination which he favours rests on establishing uniform principles in the fixing of road and rail charges. At present, the classification of railway charges rests mainly on the value in relation to weight of the goods carried, and this method has been for a long time firmly established. For road haulage, on the other hand, there are no uniform charges, and each haulier fixes his own rates in competition with his rivals. This means that the value of the goods carried can have nothing to do with the price of carriage: so that road and rail charges rest on entirely different principles. Consequently, some goods will go cheaper by road and some by rail, not in accordance with *real* differences in the expenses of carriage, but because of the different methods of fixing charges. Mr. Walker wants the General Railway Classification of goods to be swept away, and the value principle to be given up, thus leaving road and rail to compete for the available traffic in accordance with real costs.

It is commonly suggested that this would work out unfairly because the haulier, unlike the railway company, does not have to meet the capital costs of building and maintaining the permanent way. But, as Mr. Walker points out, this view is mistaken. The initial capital cost of starting in the haulage business is low; but the rapid increase of taxation both on road transport vehicles and on commercial motor spirit has added greatly to the haulier's running charges, so that by 1936 the yield of the taxes on road vehicles and fuels exceeded by 26 per cent. the total annual expenditure on roads. The haulier was certainly meeting his full proportion of these charges; and in addition the restrictions on licensing imposed under the Act of 1933 were artificially keeping down the number of road vehicles allowed to compete for traffic with the railways. Mr. Walker rightly criticises this system as preventing the public from getting the full advantage of technical improvement in road transport facilities.

It is, however, to be doubted whether his solution of the problem will work. He wants the big railway concerns to be disintegrated into their constituent lines, for the purpose of fixing charges and competing for traffic with the hauliers in order to secure through competitive pricing a stimulus to efficient service and adaptation to technical change. It is easy to see the theoretical case for this; but would it not be much better to remove all restrictions on railway operation of road services, and to leave the railways to fix their charges with no regulation except responsibility as a publicly owned service for the avoidance of discrimination between private interests? This would involve public ownership of the railways and the taking over and amalgamation with them of the big haulage contractors, leaving the smaller man a regulated freedom to operate in the interests of the public system.

It is possible, while dissenting from Mr. Walker's conclusions, to recognise that he has written an exceedingly interesting and informative book. He has a wide as well as a deep knowledge of his subject, and he has succeeded in making what might easily have been very dull reading into an eminently readable study. G. D. H. COLE

The Job to be Done. By THE RT. HON. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P. *Heinemann.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

It was fitting that Mr. Ernest Bevin, who represents the organised workers in the British Cabinet, should announce that his war aim is "social security." It was unemployment which induced the workers in more than one country to follow a Fascist lead which promised planning and economic security. That unemployment may follow this war, and indeed must do so under disorganised capitalism, is the haunting fear of many thousands of soldiers to-day; they wonder if there is any middle course between Fascism and Communism. The book, which was published first in the United States, is divided into two parts. The first consists of statements made by Mr. Bevin since he became Minister of Labour. The second is composed of extracts from Mr. Bevin's speeches and broadcasts in his capacity as Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union before the formation of the Churchill Government. Mr. Bevin speaks first as a trade unionist, but he goes far beyond that. He is also a democrat, conscious of the Western European tradition. Therefore he asserts with great vigour that "economic unity and critical and religious freedom are not incompatible." In this volume, which is composed of collected speeches and broadcasts, Mr. Bevin shows a wide range and an imaginative grasp of the international as well as the internal situation. Mr. Bevin makes no precise proposals; his speeches, after all, were made for the millions. But he says enough to show that he is one of those unfortunately rare men who can reach high ministerial position in time of war without forgetting what they are fighting for.

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Week-end Competitions

No. 641

Set by G. W. Stonier

We understand that Miss Gertrude Stein has set herself the task of translating Pétain's speeches for American readers. No doubt other eminent exiles will follow her example and we shall have Hitler interpreted by P. G. Wodehouse and Mussolini in terms of Ezra Pound. An extract of not more than 200 words from one of these three is invited.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, May 25th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 638

Set by Peter Lambda

Many children and some grown-ups have autograph books in which their friends are invited to inscribe suitable verses or mottoes. Competitors are asked to imagine that they have been requested to write something suitable into the albums of three of the following: The Marx Brothers, Lord Halifax, Vic Oliver, the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, Mae West, Madame Tabouis, Gipsy Petulengro, Pierre Laval, Lord Woolton, Sandy Macpherson, Professor Joad, Father Divine, Noel Coward, Adolf Hitler. Sources of quotations should be given, and entries are limited to 200 words.

Report by Peter Lambda

This competition taught me a lot about current preoccupations. Noel Coward, Petulengro, Father Divine, Sandy Macpherson provided hardly a flicker. Lord Woolton provoked most entries.

You couldn't have it if you *did* want it—the rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday, but never jam to-day.—Lewis Carroll.

(Sent in by four different competitors)

His diet was of wheaten bread
And milk, and oats, and straw,
Thistles or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.
On twigs of hawthorn he regaled
On pippins' russet peel:
And, when his juicy salads failed,
Sliced carrot pleased him well.
—*Epitaph on a Hare*, by Cowper.
(B. Rapaport)

Oh, let us love our occupations . . . .
Live upon our daily rations,
And always know our proper stations.
—Dickens, *The Chimes*. (A. Gibbs)

Laval and Hitler provided plenty of ponderous abuse, but very little wit. Some good exceptions:

Hitler: Winter garments must be lin'd.—*As You Like It*, III, 2. (Aileen Freedman)

Where's Bohemia?—*The Winter's Tale*.
(S. J. Sharpless)

O, to be in England now that April's there!—Browning. (E. R. Tigg)

Laval: Doubtless the pleasure is as great of being cheated as to cheat.—Butler.
(Pantarei)

Mae West excited even the envy of her own sex: "Circles are said to touch one another when they meet, but do not cut one another," quotes Miss E. Aitken from *Euclid*; and the admiration of "Benevolent Wagtail" who brought Tennyson up to date:

To lounge for ages in the darkened room,
And watch the tender curving lines of creamy Mae.

The Editor might not recognise himself in this: . . . looms out on us with the kind of horrible greatness that Milton's Satan might have had if he had come to live with a bourgeois family.—Lytton Strachey on Molière. (A. Manton)

The perfect tribute to Prof. Joad and his colleagues is paid by no fewer than eighteen competitors from Goldsmith's Deserted Village:

For even though vanquished he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound,
Amazed the gaping rustics ranged around,
And still they gazed and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But Joad does not inspire awe in all our readers: "The brains don't lie in the beard," quotes R. Pomfret from Fuller's Gnomologia, and William Bliss asks us to substitute Joad for Jowett in the well-known:

My name is Benjamin Jowett;
Whatever's worth knowing I know it.
I'm Master of Balliol College
And what I don't know isn't knowledge.

From the rest I pick out a good Vic Oliver:

But for thy wit
Thou wouldst be in the Cabinet.
(B. Cohen)

Some of these quotations may be individually better than anything in the prize-winning entries which, however, succeeded in the difficult task of producing a set of three. There seems little to choose between Towanbucket and D. D. R. Being equally deserving, they divide the prizes.

PRIZES

I

LORD WOOLTON:

O, Lord, Who made the loaves and fishes,
Look down upon these two poor dishes,
And, though they be exceeding small,
Make them, O Lord, enough for all:
For if they should our stomachs fill,
I'm sure 'twould be a miracle.
(Quoted in a letter to the Press. Authorship unknown.)

LORD HALIFAX:

. . . a man who used to say
Not once but twenty times a day
That in the turmoil and the strife
(His very words) of Public Life,
The thing of ultimate effect
Was character—not intellect.
—Hilaire Belloc (*Ladies and Gentlemen*).

MAE WEST:

This Englishwoman is so refined:
She has no bosom and no behind.
—Stevie Smith (*A Good Time was had by All*). TOWANBUCKET

II

THE MARX BROTHERS:

And you're giving a treat (penny ice and cold meat) to a party of friends and relations—
They're a ravenous horde—and they all come on board at Sloane Square and South Kensington Stations
And bound on that journey you find your attorney (who started that morning from Devon)
He's a bit undersized and you don't feel surprised when he tells you he's only eleven.
—Gilbert.

VIC OLIVER:

On the whole, I think I prefer to be the fool—even as a matter of business.—Lord Fisher.

LORD WOOLTON:

Here a little child I stand
Heaving up my either hand,
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat and on us all.
—Robert Herrick. D. D. R.

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Company Meeting

UNITED MOLASSES

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN, Mr. F. K. KIELBERG

As a convenience to stockholders who, owing to war conditions, may not find it possible to attend the company's annual meeting on May 29, the chairman has circulated in advance to stockholders a copy of the statement which would normally have been read at the meeting, as summarised below:

The Directors' Report deals fully with the figures of the Profit and Loss Account and the Balance Sheets. It would be idle to attempt to forecast the prospects for the current year.

In the United Kingdom the company continues to act as Agents for the Ministry of Supply, under the direction of the Controller of Molasses and Industrial Alcohol.

The extension of the war to the Far East has still further curtailed the company's field of activities. No news has been received from our subsidiary companies in China and Java since the Japanese occupation. The original cost of the company's assets in the areas now overrun or threatened by the Japanese amounted to over £1,250,000, but the fixed assets had already been written off by the end of 1940 and the remainder of the company's investments in China, Java and India has in the meantime also been fully provided for.

The company's fleet of tankers continues to operate under charter to the Ministry of War Transport. Losses suffered during the year were not severe and the tonnage acquired exceeds the total tonnage lost during the war. Your Directors have made provision for the anticipated high re-building cost of new tonnage.

Several of the company's masters, officers, engineers and men have during the past year distinguished themselves.

Company Meeting

AULT AND WIBORG

INCREASED PROFIT

THE eighth ordinary general meeting of Ault and Wiborg, Ltd., was held on May 8th in London.

Mr. Gerald Wellesley (the chairman) said that the net profit for the year amounted to £46,104 (as compared with £28,785 a year ago). After providing for income-tax, national defence contribution, and the dividend on the Five and a-Half per Cent. Preference shares, the directors recommended the transfer to Preference share capital redemption fund of £5,000 and a dividend of 2½ per cent., less tax, on the Ordinary shares. Since the company came into being in 1934 the net assets had increased from £350,000 to £512,623.

When he addressed the shareholders a year ago he made it clear that so long as the war continued the prosperity of their normal business—namely, the furnishing of supplies to the newspaper, printing and allied industries—was likely to be influenced by increasing difficulties. This side of the business continued to be adversely affected by the numerous restrictions imposed on those industries during the year, not least among them being the progressive curtailment in the use of newsprint.

Every endeavour had also been made to broaden the whole basis of the company's business and put the plant and equipment of the parent company and its subsidiaries to the best possible use in the present circumstances.

The report was unanimously adopted.

Your Will

The appointment of the Westminster Bank as Executor or Trustee ensures immunity from the expense and trouble which arise from the necessity of appointing new Trustees by reason of death or other cause.

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